THE CHANGING FACE OF COMMUNISM

SIR PERCIVAL GRIFFITHS CIE
Indian Civil Service (Retired)
Sometime Scholar of Peterhouse, Cambridge

THE BODLEY HEAD
LONDON

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Acknowledgements

If this book has any merit, I owe it in great measure to a number of specialists who have given me valuable advice, but who prefer to remain anonymous. I am grateful also to my wife, who has put up with a good many lonely evenings in order that I might learn something about Communism. Last but not least, I must thank my efficient secretary, Miss Hammond, for her unlimited patience.

P. J. GRIFFITHS

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TO JOHN

who also studies these problems

Preface

IN THE course of discussions in India with business men, both British and Indian, some years ago, the question constantly emerged as to the proper attitude to adopt towards Communist Trade Unions. Some of those concerned argued that the employer was not interested in the politics of his workers and that Communist Unions were often better run and more reliable than those connected with the Congress and Socialist parties. Others pointed out that labour provided one of the most effective channels of Communist infiltration; that Communist reasonableness was only a tactical phase; and that we ought not to make a rod for our own backs.

The one thing that emerged clearly from these talks was that none of us knew much about Communism at all. Our attitude towards it was based mainly on prejudice and we could not give adequate answers to any of the most obvious questions about it—What is its philosophy? What are the conditions under which it springs to light? Does the raising of the standard of living discourage or encourage its growth? How does it work amongst different peoples? What gives it something of the character of a religion? As men unable to answer these questions, we could hardly expect to have a well thought-out policy with regard to Communism amongst organized labour.

On my return to England I was therefore led to embark on a somewhat dreary course of study in this field, during which I acquired a lot of information and, in the end, formed certain views. My conclusions may not be of much consequence, but a potted version of the facts and theories which formed the basis of the study should be of interest to busy men who feel the need to know more about Communism.

That is the real justification for this book, which is neither profound nor original and, it is hoped, will serve as a kind of 'Business Man's Guide to Communism'.

It is clearly impossible in a space of about eighty thousand words to study the operations of Communism all over the world and the examination in this book has therefore been confined to Russia, China, South and South East Asia, Eastern Europe and Britain. Communism in America has already been well-documented, and in other tempting fields such as Africa and the Middle East the strands of Communism and anti-Western feelings are so closely inter-woven that deductions today from the local

pattern might be misleading. If I have succeeded in my task, the field explored will be wide enough to illustrate the nature and *modus operandi* of Communism.

P. J. GRIFFITHS

Wentworth, Surrey

1st May 1961

I

Historical Background

INTRODUCTORY

IT WOULD be convenient if we could, at the outset of our study, define Communism in one or two succinct sentences. Unfortunately this is impossible and any attempt at it would involve the use of those unintelligible phrases—'dialectical materialism'—'the economic interpretation of history'—'surplus values'—and the like, which make most books by Communist writers dreary and almost unreadable. We must be content to say that it comprises four elements—a philosophy derived, with many modifications, from the teachings of the great German thinker, Hegel—a materialistic view of history—a certain economic theory—and a form of political organization. Each element of this compound will be described in the chapters of this book. Together they build up to a system in which the ultimate, theoretical aim is a classless, almost ungoverned State, to be reached through a transitional stage in which, paradoxically enough, the State is so powerful and all pervading, that superficially, Communism and Fascism seem to have much in common.

Before we can profitably study the development of this system, it is necessary to consider the conditions in which it arose, and we must begin by jettisoning two popular British misconceptions about it. The first of these is the vague idea that Communism was a by-product of the Russian revolution. In reality, it is not even of mainly Russian origin and was a highly developed creed long before the Revolution of 1917. France, Germany and even Britain could claim to be its sponsors more justly than Russia and it was partly by historical accident that Russia provided the first opportunity for a large-scale Communist experiment. The rise of Christianity in a sense provides a parallel. Although that religion was not Roman in origin, it was its adoption by the Roman Emperor Constantine that gave it world-wide political significance. A student of the history of Christianity would nevertheless start his researches in Palestine rather than in Rome or Constantinople. Similarly it will pay us to begin our study of Communism by forgetting our obsession with Russia, though we shall have to return to that country a little later.

A second popular belief, conflicting with that just discussed, is that Communism was produced out of the hat by Karl Marx. What that

remarkable man in fact did was to give form and life to ideas which had long been struggling for birth.

It is indeed one of the paradoxes of history that a book as dull and confused as *Das Kapital*, which nobody would read for pleasure, should have generated forces as vital as those which were released by the writers of the New Testament. The explanation would appear to be that, amidst much obscure verbiage and muddled thought, Karl Marx turned the limelight on to social injustice at a time when the condition of the poor in many countries in Europe was at its worst and when, in some of those countries, the intellectual classes were in revolt against illiberal and reactionary régimes. He explained the mechanics of social reform, though unfortunately he confused the issue by adding thereto a philosophical theory as to the inevitability of the changes which he wished to see brought about. Communism in origin was, indeed, the offspring of the conviction that the capitalist system stood condemned by the misery it had produced and of the belief in a Utopia founded on the abolition of private property. It is reasonable, therefore, to look for the forerunners of Marx in periods and countries where discontent abounded.

THE FORERUNNERS OF MARX*

On this view it is not surprising that the greatest and most famous of modern Utopias should have been written in England at the beginning of the sixteenth century, when the aftermath of the Wars of the Roses, together with the disbandment of private armies and the first phase of enclosures of land for pasturage, had hastened the breakdown of the medieval economy and created almost unparallelled misery throughout the country. It may well seem ridiculous to depict Sir Thomas More, a Catholic and a martyr, as a Communist in embryo, but his Utopia, published in 1516, has many features which were to be prominent in Communist writings much later. Ralph Hythloday, the official *rapporteur* on Utopia, regarded private property and the use of money as incompatible with justice and happiness. 'Though to speak plainly my real sentiments, I must freely own, that so long as there is any property, and while money is the standard of all other things, I cannot think that a nation can be governed either justly or happily: not justly, because the best things will fall to the share of the worst men; nor happily, because all things will be divided among a few (and even those are not in all respects happy), the rest being left to be absolutely miserable. . . . But in Utopia, where every

*This section owes a good deal to Alexander Gray's *The Socialist Tradition*.

man has a right to everything, they all know that if care is taken to keep the public stores full, no private man can want anything; for among them there is no unequal distribution, so that no man is poor, none in necessity; and though no man has anything, yet they are all rich; for what can make a man so rich as to lead a serene and cheerful life, free from anxieties; neither apprehending want himself, nor vexed with the endless complaints of his wife?'

In Utopia, therefore, food and other commodities are communally distributed to all who require them, but in practice everybody eats in the excellent, free, public dining halls, 'since it is both ridiculous and foolish for anyone to give themselves the trouble to make ready an ill-dinner at home'. This readiness to assume that the State will always do things better than the private individual was to be a recurring theme in socialist and communist literature.

Hythloday's views of government as a conspiracy of the rich would also have done credit to a modern communist, but did not prevent him from considering that, once private property had been abolished, Government should impinge heavily on the citizen at all points. The twentieth century Hyde Park orator who declared with emotion that 'when that great day of freedom dawns, you will do what you are damn well told' would have been completely at home with Ralph Hythloday, whose description of Utopian regimentation is well summarized by Alexander Gray, the historian of The Socialist Tradition. 'Life in Utopia is subject to strict discipline: everything is made to a pattern. The cities are numbered; they are at appropriate distances from each other; the number of families in each city and the size of families are regulated. They have their magistrates—Syphogrants and Tranibors, if such details interest. They have a Prince and a Council; but as in all authoritarian states, it is not for the ordinary citizen to meddle unduly with state affairs; "It is death for anyone to meet and consult concerning the state, unless it be either in their ordinary council, or in the assembly of the whole body of the people". That Utopia entails such a vigorous repression of talk in the tavern has perhaps been insufficiently observed. Everyone masters two trades, agriculture and one other. All wear the same clothes, except in so far as is necessary to distinguish the sexes, and the married from the unmarried. Moreover, fashions never change. The day is strictly divided up between its various occupations, and the hour-glass is the tyrant of every man's life.'

Later Elizabethan times ushered in a more satisfactory social pattern and the craving for the ideal was forgotten in the more exciting prospect

of exploiting the New World and developing trade overseas. There was no point in abolishing private property if you had a sporting chance of growing rich by robbing the Spaniards. Not for nearly three hundred years did the dreamers of Communist dreams again become important and by this time the main scene of their visions had shifted to the Continent, where in several countries society was in process of dissolution. The growth of nationalism, the decline of the feudal nobility and the weakening of ecclesiastical authority had by then given rise to a profound *malaise*. Thoughtful men were dissatisfied and ready, therefore, to examine the foundations of society. In France the disorder was particularly far advanced and it was in that country that, in the eighteenth-century, radical political thought assumed its most energetic and destructive character.

Fortunately for our sanity, it is not necessary to study in detail the works of the numerous social-economic philosophers—many of them fanatics by nature and some of them insufferable bores—who explained at great length how the world could be put right. Rousseau, who must certainly be excluded from the categories of bores, started the ball rolling with his great challenge—'Man is born free; and everywhere he is in chains.' His almost fanatical belief in equality and his insistence that property was the root of nearly all social evil are too well known to require lengthy analysis and it is only necessary to quote a short passage from his Discourse on the Origin of Inequality. 'The first man who, having enclosed a piece of land, took it into his head to say: "This belongs to me", and found people simple enough to believe him, was the true founder of civil society. What crimes, wars, murders, what miseries and horrors would have been spared the human race by him who, snatching out the stakes or filling in the ditch, should have cried to his fellows: "Beware of listening to this impostor; you are lost if you forget that the fruits belong to all and that the earth belongs to none." '

Rousseau was followed by a number of lesser men typified by Saint-Simon and his school, who could not quite screw up their courage to preach equality, but glorified the State and envisaged the day when, by the painless process of abolishing inheritance, the State would own all the instruments of production, and ultimately all property of all kinds. The next important apostle of this school of thought proclaimed with astounding confidence the doctrine of the natural enmity between the different classes of society and paved the way for the Communist doctrine of the class war. Early in the nineteenth century Charles Fourier expounded his thesis thus—'Every person engaged in an industry is at war with the mass,

and malevolent toward it from personal interest. A physician wishes his fellow citizens good, genuine cases of fevers, and an attorney good lawsuits in every family. An architect has need of a good conflagration which should reduce a quarter of the city to ashes, and a glazier desires a good hailstorm which should break all the panes of glass. A tailor, a shoemaker, wishes the public to use only poorly-dyed stuffs and shoes made of bad leather, so that a triple amount may be consumed—for the benefit of trade; that is their refrain. A court of justice regards it as opportune that France continues to commit a hundred and twenty thousand crimes and actionable offences, that number being necessary to maintain the criminal courts. It is thus that in civilized industry every individual is in intentional war against the mass.'

Fourier was, however, a crank and more importance should be attached to Louis Blanc, of whom it has been said that 'he represents the transition from Utopian socialism to what may for convenience be termed proletarian socialism.' He was a true harbinger of Karl Marx inasmuch as he taught that an all-powerful State was necessary to establish the rights of the poor, but that ultimately the weak would no longer be weak and the State, having no further protective functions to fulfil, would be no longer required. In the words of Engels many years later, it would wither away.

While French intellectuals were thus groping towards new social and economic theories, similar ideas were gaining ground amongst a limited class in England. Robert Owen, who began his business life as a practical, benevolent autocrat and carried out his great experiment in co-operation while still in his thirties, became in later life a not very clear-sighted visionary. He anticipated the Marxist theory that economic environment is all that counts in forming individual character and he went on to inveigh against private property as the most disruptive of all social forces. He also propounded the theory, which Marx developed later, that labour was the sole creator and measure of value. Robert Owen the philanthropist and Joseph Stalin have little in common and the reference here to Owen is only important to show that the ideas which were afterwards made the foundation of the Communist doctrine were vaguely present in the disturbed minds of men early in the nineteenth century.

It is not necessary to dwell on the other early British sponsors of Communist theory. Few readers of this book will want to spend much time on Hall, who preached the doctrine of the class war and anticipated Marx's theory of surplus value—or Hodgskin who taught that labour was the sole source of wealth, while the capitalist contributed nothing—or Gray

who became obsessed with the evils of competition. So far, Socialism and Communism were travelling along the same path. They diverged when Karl Marx added to his economic and materialistic philosophy a new view of history, but it is unlikely that his speculations would have had much practical effect but for the fact that the times were out of joint.

KARL MARX*

During the period of his dominance in Europe, Napoleon set himself deliberately to undermine the authority of the rulers of Germany and in the process to destroy privilege and inequality. For a while the minds of liberal Germans were filled with hope, but after the final downfall of Napoleon, the kings and princes of Germany began energetically to root out these dangerous new ideas, to increase the power of the police and the censors and to re-establish their own unquestioned authority. Nowhere was this reaction more thorough than in Prussia and nowhere did it press more harshly on the Jews, many of whom had, during the Napoleonic Wars, emerged from the ghetto to take a full and active part in society.

Herschel Levi, father of Karl Marx, was a simple, thoughtful, Jewish lawyer, whose innate rationalism was strengthened by his study of the French philosophers and who, early in life, ceased to have any Jewish convictions though he saw no reason to break away formally from his own community. He ceased, however, to move in Jewish circles and he changed his name to Heinrich Marx. When the reaction after Waterloo left him in effect with the option of either returning to the ghetto or becoming a Christian he found no difficulty in accepting Lutheranism. In 1818, a year after Heinrich's formal conversion, Karl Marx was born in Trier.

Marx was an unusual boy, who soon gave evidence of a somewhat domineering temper combined with an insatiable appetite for all sorts of knowledge. He was neither thwarted by his very indulgent father, nor persecuted by his contemporaries, and there is no reason to suppose that he developed any of those juvenile complexes in terms of which modern psychologists are so fond of explaining the later character of well-known individuals. At the time of his entry into the University of Berlin in 1836 he found himself in company with a large number of young men like himself—over-earnest, somewhat humourless students whose chief joy in life arose from fierce, academic disputations.

* In this section we have drawn freely on *Karl Marx* by Isaiah Berlin.

The University of Berlin was at that time in a state of intellectual ferment and its teachers of philosophy and history were divided into three fiercely contending groups. First there were the rationalists—influenced greatly by the French philosophers who taught that the application of reason and the scientific method to the problems of human society could lead to the millennium. They were impressed with the tremendous advance of physical science and argued in the words of Isaiah Berlin, the biographer of Marx, that 'If it is possible to discover by empirical means under what conditions bodies fall, planets rotate, trees grow, ice turns into water and water into steam, it must be no less possible to find out under what conditions men are caused to eat, drink, sleep, love, hate, fight one another. . . . Until this is discovered by a Newton or a Galileo, no true science of society can come into being.'

The second group consisted of the Hegelians, who denied that the physical sciences provided a useful analogy. Those sciences depended on the assumption that the same circumstances would always produce the same results, whereas in human society identical circumstances never occurred. Hegel himself had taught that the ultimate reality is not matter but ideas and it was a logical extension of this view to the historical field which led the Hegelians to propound what has been called the metaphysical view of history. Just as an individual has his personal character which unfolds itself throughout and indeed moulds his own life, so a culture or a nation has what Hegel called its Spirit or Idea—'the motive, dynamic factor in the development of specific peoples and civilizations'. Individual reformers could do nothing unless their efforts were in harmony with the Spirit—in other words, the reformer must adapt himself to and modify tradition, rather than destroy it. Hegel also taught the necessity of war and struggle—and it is here that the influence of this school on Marx was most lasting. This teaching is well summarized by Berlin—'Every process is one of perpetual tension between two incompatible forces each straining against the other and by this natural conflict advancing their own development; this view . . . grows in strength and sharpness until it turns into an open conflict, which culminates in a final collision, the violence of which destroys both the adversaries. This is the point at which the hitherto continuous development is broken, a sudden leap takes place to a new level, whereupon the tension between a new dyad of forces begins once more. . . . He called the process dialectical.' We shall have to return to this view of history later.

In the hands of lesser men than Hegel, his philosophy rapidly declined to a mystical and decadent idealism, and a reaction set in against it towards

the end of Marx's time in Berlin, giving rise to a school of Young Hegelians led by Feuerbach. It is sufficient to say that it rejected the Hegelian doctrine of the Spirit as a jumble of empty words and declared that the determining factors in history were not spiritual, but material conditions.

Marx threw himself with enthusiasm into the disputes between the conflicting schools of thought. He soon abandoned the study of law and devoted his whole time to philosophy and history. He compromised himself with the University authorities by joint authorship of a pamphlet which sought to promote atheism by identifying it with the Hegelian philosophy and he thereby lost all chance of the academic career for which he had hoped. By this time his father had died and Marx was without financial means of support. He readily accepted a post, first as a staff contributor and then as editor of a radical journal newly founded in Cologne. Marx ran the paper entirely on his own lines and the vehemence of his nature soon led him to overstep the mark and to demand war against the Russians, who were then Prussia's major ally. His paper was suppressed in 1843, but he had by that time earned a reputation as a brilliant though aggressive journalist and he was at once offered a post as joint editor of a German journal in Paris.

For those restless souls who could enjoy a revolutionary atmosphere, Paris in the fourth decade of the nineteenth century was an exciting place —the temporary home of brilliant exiles from half the countries of Europe, whose hopes had not yet been shattered by the failures of 1848. As a modern writer tells us—'the emotions were intensely cultivated, individual feelings and beliefs were expressed in ardent phrases, revolutionary and humanitarian slogans were repeated with fervour by men who were prepared to stake their lives upon them . . . the mood was exalted and optimistic'. The intolerant Marx despised emotion and could not conceal his contempt for some of the revolutionary leaders. He buried himself in books and made an exhaustive study of the reasons for the failure of the French Revolution and of what he came to regard as the laws of social change. By the time he was exiled from Paris in 1845 for a highly objectionable article about the King of Prussia, his general philosophy and his view of history had already crystallized.

Even more important than his studies during this period was his meeting with Friedrich Engels and the beginning of that partnership without which the theories of Karl Marx might have made little impact on the workaday world. The two men were wholly different in character and cast of mind and a brief description of them at this stage may be useful.

It may be said at once that Engels was the much more attractive of the two personalities. Marx was essentially a man of the study, with none of the normal qualities of a political leader. His speeches were uninspiring, his writings difficult to read and though his life was devoted to what he regarded as service to humanity, he had no love for his fellow men as individuals and disliked contact with the masses. His enemy, the anarchist Bakunin, described him as 'immensely vain, quarrelsome, as intolerant as Jehovah, the god of his fathers, and like him insanely vindictive'. If this had been the whole story, Marx would not have been the most important teacher in the modern world. The secret of his power lay perhaps in his singleness of purpose, his almost demoniacal mental energy and his tremendous intellectual force, which displayed itself in acute analysis and in a capacity for assimilating a vast range of knowledge and reducing it to a coherent though not always logical form.

Friedrich Engels possessed none of Marx's creative powers, but was much closer to the ordinary man. The son of a wealthy German cotton textile manufacturer, he spent some years of his life in his father's factories in Germany and Manchester and learned a good deal about the organization of industry. In England he led a curious double life which has been vividly described by Leopold Schwarzschilde—'He did his office work impeccably—although he felt any contact with "filthy commerce" to be lowering. He fulfilled just as impeccably those duties towards Manchester society which were expected of him as a son of the house of Engels. . . . The society people in Manchester had country estates and that meant hunting. Now, Engels was a mighty hunter before the Lord. Out of the somewhat puritanical allowance that his father sent him he kept his own saddle-horse and there was nothing more wonderful in the world than these fox hunts in red coats behind a pack of hounds. He behaved irreproachably so that he might be invited to his beloved hunt.' But, continues Schwarzschilde 'In his spare time he put on his oldest clothes and mixed with the children of destiny. He planned to write a book on the condition of the working class in England and went about collecting facts and statistics. Mary Burns, a red-haired Irish girl from the proletariat crossed his path, and they lived together as man and wife. She took him with her to visit the workers' families at home. There he watched and listened. From time to time he wrote, with his own remarkable ease, articles in English for the Chartist Press and articles in German for the socialist papers in Prussia.' After a time he came to the conclusion—which might well have seemed justified by the situation in England at that time—that the British Isles were facing a socialist revolution.

This was a very different background from that of the detached philosopher, Karl Marx. The latter could provide the profundity of thought, but Engels could tell him the facts of real life and could also write easily and persuasively. Moreover, unlike Marx, Engels was not a dominating character, and was more than ready to play second fiddle.

The alliance between these two men became of practical importance when Marx, after his banishment from Paris, moved to Brussels where Engels, who had temporarily left the parental business, frequently visited him. Marx had now become convinced that only an armed rising of the workers could bring about the Communist revolution, and he set himself to build up a group dedicated to this purpose. Up to this stage the only significant Communist organization had been an international body known as the League of the Just, the aims of which were somewhat nebulous. Even now the Communist party was not founded in any formal sense, but Marx and his friends began to speak of themselves as Communists. The party soon comprised seventeen members, fifteen of whom were writers, while only two or three were 'workers'. Communist correspondence committees were now established in several countries including England and in 1847 the London Committee commissioned Marx to formulate its statement of aims. Engels had for some time been pressing Marx to expound the philosophy of Communism in a comprehensive form, but this Marx was not yet ready to do. The first manifesto of the Communist Party written for the London Committee is, in fact, not a philosophical treatise, but a clarion call to arms, and although there have been endless discussions as to the respective shares of Marx and Engels in drafting it, the pungency of its style in parts and its popular appeal leave little room for doubt that if its content came from Marx it was Engels who gave it living shape.

It is indeed one of the most dynamic of pamphlets. Its opening is as dramatic as the first few bars in Beethoven's Fifth Symphony. 'A spectre is haunting Europe—the spectre of Communism. All the powers of old Europe have entered into a holy alliance to exorcise this spectre: Pope and Tsar, Metternich and Guizot, French Radicals and German police-spies.'

It goes on to proclaim that the history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles, but declares that in modern times these antagonisms have sharpened so that 'society as a whole is more and more splitting up into two great hostile camps, with two great classes directly facing each other—bourgeoisie and proletariat.' In accordance with the Marxist view that impersonal economic forces control all development,

the Manifesto depicts the growth of modern industry in curiously impersonal terms. The manufacturing system 'took the place' of feudalism. . . . The place of manufacture was 'taken' by the great modern industries . . . 'modern industry has established the world market'. There is scarcely a suggestion that individual will and effort played a part in these great changes.

The writers then describe the rise of the bourgeoisie to political power, and make the well-known statement that 'the executive of the modern State is but a Committee managing the common affairs of the whole bourgeoisie'.

At this point it is clear that the writers were unduly influenced by the harsh character of industrialism in its early days, but even so it is a little difficult to take seriously their tears over the disappearance of the old 'feudal, patriarchal, idyllic relations'. They continue, 'It has pitilessly torn asunder the motley feudal ties that bound man to his "natural superiors", and has left no other nexus between man and man than naked self-interest, than callous "cash payment". It has drowned the most heavenly ecstasies of religious fervour, of chivalrous enthusiasm, of philistine sentimentalism, in icy water of egotistical calculation.' . . . 'The bourgeoisie has stripped of its halo every occupation hitherto honoured and looked up to with reverent awe. It has converted the physician, the lawyer, the priest, the poet, the man of science, into its paid wage labourers.'

'The bourgeoisie has torn away from the family its sentimental veil, and has reduced the family relation to a mere money relation.'

A little further on the Manifesto pays an unjustified tribute to the bourgeoisie for breaking down narrow nationalism—a statement that reads strangely in the light of the part played by economic struggles in bringing about war in our time. 'In place of the old local and national seclusion and self-sufficiency, we have intercourse in every direction, universal interdependence of nations. And as in material, so also in intellectual production. The intellectual creations of individual nations become common property. National one-sidedness and narrow-mindedness become more and more impossible, and from the numerous national and local literature there arises a world literature.'

The writers then become prophetic. 'Not only has the bourgeoisie forged the weapons that bring death to itself; it has also called into existence the men who are to wield those weapons—the modern working class—the proletariat.'

After a just reflection on the way in which machinery has deprived the

work of the proletarians of all individual character and charm, the Manifesto states that the wage of a workman is restricted almost entirely to what he requires for his bare subsistence and for the propagation of his race. This statement, which had considerable truth in it at the time, has clearly no relevance at all to the conditions of modern capitalist society. This, indeed, is a fundamental weakness of the Manifesto. It proclaimed as eternal verities, facts which were local and temporary.

The writers then again enter the realm of prophecy with curiously mixed results. They predict correctly enough the rapid growth in the organization and strength of the workers and yet forecast that the labourer will sink 'deeper and deeper below the conditions of existence of his own class. . . . He becomes a pauper and pauperism develops more rapidly than population and wealth'. Almost equally at variance with the facts of later history is the confident prediction that more and more of the lower middle classes will be forced down into the proletariat. Once again the sponsors of Communism sought to found a timeless philosophy on the conditions prevailing in a short, unhappy, transition stage.

After a statement of immediate aims, including such now commonplace items as a heavy graduated income tax and free education, the Manifesto continues with a somewhat dreary section in which non-Communist socialists are ridiculed. It then returns to the emotional key of the opening paragraph with the proud declaration that the Communists support every revolutionary movement against the existing social and political order and it concludes with the stirring words: 'Let the ruling classes tremble at a Communist revolution. The proletarians have nothing to lose but their chains. They have a world to win. Working men of all countries, unite.'

As an appeal to the emotions, parts of the Manifesto are superb, but it has no claims to be anything more than that. The world was to wait a long time for a reasoned statement of the philosophy and objectives of the Communists. Marx was indeed still preparing himself to write his *magnum opus* and the next stage in his preparation began when, after the collapse of the socialist revolution in Paris in 1848, he left the Continent finally and settled down permanently in England. There for the rest of his life he was mainly supported by Engels, who had been driven by financial necessity to rejoin his father's firm.

Marx came to England with high hopes of an immediate revolution, but his information was badly out of date. The spirit of 1850 was not that of the early forties, and the demand of England was not for revolution but for reform. Marx was profoundly depressed by this discovery, as well as

by the intrigues which seem to have characterized the Communist party at this time, but he settled down to a life of study spent mainly in the reading room of the British Museum. Except for his remarkably lucid lectures to working men and for his part in founding the abortive First International, Marx lived a life of isolation and it may be doubted whether his thirty-odd years of life in England added significantly to his knowledge of the thought and way of life of the ordinary Englishman.

His life was hard and often sad. 'I have literally not a farthing in the house.... I have reached the charming stage where I can no longer go out because my suits are pawned and cannot eat meat because the butcher's bill is still unpaid.... At home where everything is perpetually in a state of siege, I cannot do much.' These genuine cries of distress recur frequently in his correspondence. There is too a vivid official report on the condition of his life in Soho—'In the whole apartment there is not one sound piece of furniture. Everything is broken, shabby and ragged and there is the greatest muddle everywhere. In the middle of the living-room there is a big table covered with oilcloth. On it are piled his manuscripts, books and papers; his children's toys; his wife's sewing; chipped teacups; dirty spoons, knives and forks; lamps, an inkwell, glasses, claypipes, tobacco and... One of the chairs has only three legs; and the children are playing at cooking on another one which happens to be whole and which they offer to the guest; so if you sit down it is at the risk of ruining your trousers.' Few great men can have worked in worse conditions, but his tremendous singleness of purpose drove him on, until at last in 1867 the first volume of *Das Kapital* appeared, to be followed posthumously by the remaining volumes.

Although the number of those who have read *Das Kapital* from cover to cover must be very limited, its influence has been profound. It is not necessary for us to study its three volumes in detail, but with the historical background now given we are in a position to discuss the general theory of Marxist Communism.

II

The Philosophy of Communism*

THE INFLUENCE OF HEGEL

THE FOUNDERS of revolutionary movements have not generally attempted to base their teachings on abstruse, metaphysical principles, but Karl Marx, profoundly influenced by the great German system-maker, Hegel, felt the need of an integrated scheme of philosophy, history and economics. The basis of Marxism is a certain view of history which is itself derived from a variant of the teachings of Hegel. A detailed exposition of Hegelian doctrines would require a volume and is beyond the capacity of the present writer, but a brief and necessarily superficial reference to one or two aspects of it is essential to an understanding of Marxism.

Although it is impossible to define mind and matter satisfactorily, philosophers can be divided into classes according to their view of the relation of those two concepts to reality. Materialists maintain that the whole universe can be explained in terms of matter—even thought and feeling are merely chemical processes in the human brain. Idealists, on the other hand, regard mind as the sole reality. They argue that the only events of which we can have direct knowledge are sensations in our own mind and from this we construct, by inference, the outside universe. Matter may be regarded on some physical theories as nothing more than stresses and strains in a non-existent ether, or as the mathematicians would say, a series of differential equations. The mind which constructs the equations is the only reality.

Hegel was an idealist and not only regarded mind as the ultimate substance of the universe, but asserted that the only reality was the Absolute Idea—thought thinking about itself—which included the whole universe whether of mind or matter. We need not stop to ponder deeply on this very abstruse theory. It led Hegel to assert that all separate things or ideas are simply aspects of the Whole, or as he called it the Absolute. Their separateness is unreal. 'Nothing is ultimately and completely real except the Whole'.

It is impossible, therefore, to make any completely accurate statement about anything except the Absolute, for a statement about a thing in

* This is necessarily a difficult chapter—the only one in the book likely to cause headaches.

isolation ignores its relation to the Absolute which is an essential part of it. Bertrand Russell states the position with his customary lucidity. 'The view of Hegel, and of many other philosophers, is that the character of any portion of the universe is so profoundly affected by its relations to the other parts and to the whole, that no true statement can be made about any part except to assign it its place in the whole. Since its place in the whole depends upon all the other parts, a true statement about its place in the whole will at the same time assign the place of every other part in the whole. Thus there can be only one true statement; there is no truth except the whole truth. And similarly nothing is quite real except the whole, for any part, when isolated, is changed in character by being isolated, and therefore no longer appears quite what it truly is. On the other hand, when a part is viewed in relation to the whole, as it should be, it is seen to be not self-subsistent, and to be incapable of existing except as part of just that whole which alone is truly real.'

The impossibility of making an absolute statement about anything in isolation leads up to Hegel's use of what he called 'the dialectic'. The word itself goes back to the days of Greek philosophy, when it referred to the art of finding out the truth by pointing out the contradictions in the statement of whoever was expounding a view. In Hegelian terms it refers to a process described as thesis, antithesis and synthesis. The thesis is the proposition first put forward; it must necessarily be incorrect, since accurate statements are only possible about the Absolute; it must, therefore, be contradicted by the antithesis. This in its turn must be incorrect. The synthesis then puts together whatever is sound in the thesis and the antithesis and is nearer to the truth than the original thesis. Since, however, the synthesis itself must also be inaccurate, it too has to be negated and the process goes on forever until we reach the Absolute.

If this 'dialectic' were merely a process for discovering the truth, it would be beyond criticism and very much in line with modern scientific method. It is, however, more than that. According to Hegel, 'Reason is the substance of the universe'—and the world itself must conform to the laws of thought. The universe is nothing but the unfolding, in the framework of time, of the dialectical process of these syntheses and antitheses. Since the synthesis is always nearer truth and perfection than the thesis or antithesis, this view leads to the belief in the inevitability of historical progress and as we have seen in a previous chapter, the impulse to that progress is provided by the mysterious entity called Spirit.

Marx was very selective in his use of the Hegelian philosophy. He rejected the idealist element and taught a form of materialism. At the same

time he accepted the theory of the dialectic, though he substituted economics for the Spirit as the compulsive force in human affairs. He showed no valid reason why such a force should exist at all in a materialistic universe. As Bertrand Russell puts it 'To Hegel the development of history is as logical as a game of chess. Marx-Engels keep to the rules of chess, while supposing that the chessmen move themselves in accordance with the laws of physics, without the intervention of a player.'

A further weakness is that Marx quite omitted to define what constituted a contradiction, or what he meant by opposites which must negate each other. He was thus able to make the dialectical philosophy fit his own historical and economic views. Feudalism was the thesis, which has been contradicted by the antithesis, Capitalism, and ultimately both will be subsumed in the synthesis, Socialism. It would be just as reasonable to regard Capitalism as the thesis and Communism as the antithesis and to assume that by way of synthesis some new form of society will in due course replace Communism—but Marx will have none of this. The treatment of Communism as the synthesis has the inestimable advantage that, since the law of the dialectic is immutable, Communists can feel complete assurance of victory. Nothing, they believe, can impede the march of Communism, but the wise man can make sure of being on the winning side. Moreover, since the synthesis is always a stage nearer the truth than the thesis or the antithesis, the Communist can feel certain not only that he is winning, but that his side is the right one. It is perhaps this assurance of righteousness and ultimate success—in a sense parallel to the unshakeable faith of the true Christian in the triumph of the kingdom of God—that gives Communism its tremendous, dynamic qualities. The theory is, however, neither scientific nor based on pure reason and in spite of all his contempt for sentiment, it is clear that Marx allowed emotion to take charge when he framed it.

Three other aspects of Hegel's teaching must be briefly mentioned. In the first place, in his view of history, strife and war were an essential part of the progress towards the ultimate synthesis—an idea which in Marx's philosophy developed into the inevitability of the class war.

Secondly, Hegel glorified the State, since it appeared to him the highest embodiment of that mystical entity, the Spirit, which he had so laboriously constructed. Although Marx and Engels did not accept this view and spoke of the State as an entity which would ultimately become unnecessary, the belief that the State is more important than the individuals who compose it, has become an essential part of Communist thought.

Thirdly, Hegel taught that, in the words of Carew Hunt—'Change

takes place by imperceptible qualitative mutations until there arrives a point, which Hegel calls the "node", beyond which a thing cannot change while remaining the same. The classical illustration of this is the change of state of a substance as when water turns to steam at 100° C. and into ice at 0° C. But just as the change occurs abruptly, so that water is at one moment water and at the next, steam or ice, so the progress of humanity is not effected by a gradual process of growth but by sudden "jumps". Marxists call these jumps revolutions, and use the above law to show their inevitability.'

We may sum up this section by saying that Hegel taught an idealistic philosophy, the validity of which is questioned by many thinkers; that Marx rejected the core of that philosophy, but accepted and fitted into his own economic thought the procedure of the 'dialectic', the necessity of the class struggle, and the inevitability of progress through revolution.

THE MATERIALISTIC CONCEPTION OF HISTORY*

Having rejected Hegel's idealism and accepted a view of the world according to which mind and spirit are only the products of matter, Marx applied that doctrine to the interpretation of history. It is indeed his 'Materialistic Conception of History' that distinguishes him from earlier writers. That conception was set out in fifteen ponderous propositions, which for simplicity, can be broken down into three groups.

The thesis of the first group is that not only the economic structure of society, but all man's political, intellectual and spiritual activities are the inevitable result of purely economic factors. Amidst much obscuring jargon about 'productive forces' and the 'mode of production', this thesis is seen to consist of two parts. The first proposition is that the economic organization of society at any given moment is determined, not by what men want, but by those forces of nature which, at the particular state of knowledge then prevailing, are available to men for productive purposes. To illustrate this—at a certain stage of knowledge of agriculture there 'had to be' a feudal system, while the discovery of steam power made the capitalist system inevitable.

This proposition is, to say the least of it, highly doubtful. If it were correct, the same productive forces ought at all times and places to produce the same economic pattern. There should have been no difference between the economic organization of the Greek City State and that of

* This section is largely based on the brilliant study of *The Materialistic Conception of History*, by Karl Federn.

the contemporary Hindu village based on the joint ownership of land by the community—since the physical resources within the knowledge of Greeks and Hindus at that time were much the same. Marx's proposition would indeed involve a curious result. It is clear that the discovery and application of the forces of production require the exercise of individual intellect and will in the highest degree, since the steam engine, for example, did not discover itself. Yet we are required to believe that human efforts stop short at this foundation stage and have nothing to do with determining the economic organization of society built on it.

The second and more important element in this thesis is that economic forces are the sole factor determining history and that all intellectual and spiritual activity, all our laws and all our institutions, are the inevitable outcome of the prevailing economic structure of society. To use Marx's somewhat turgid language 'The political and intellectual life of a society is determined by the mode of production, as necessitated by the wants of material life'. The same principle has been expressed more simply by a modern Marxist—'The mode of production is the primary agency of all historical change.'

Marx advanced no historical data at all in support of this dogmatic proposition. To examine it adequately would require a complete review of history covering many volumes, but one or two illustrations may suffice to make its meaning clear. If this theory is correct, the rise of Christianity must have been primarily due to some economic cause and indeed Marx himself did regard Christianity as the religion which came into existence because it was 'befitting the bourgeois society that lives on producing saleable goods'. This astonishing statement, which obviously could not be arrived at by abstract reasoning, should have been based on historical evidence. Where is there any such evidence? What economic crisis gave rise to Christianity in Palestine? What change in the economic pattern of society led to its adoption in Rome? Why has it during nineteen centuries thriven and declined in every conceivable different kind of economic society?

A modern Marxist, following the same line of thought, boldly sought to attribute the rise of Puritanism in England to the transition to the monetary economy, ignoring the fact that as Federn points out, 'the same transition in other countries did not conduce to Puritanism'.

Religion, however, is not the only thing that would have to be explained in economic terms, if we adopted the Marxian theory. Every aspect of man's life must be covered, and we must show how economic

causes led to the Gothic style of architecture in the middle ages, or the development of the symphony in the eighteenth century—since, as Engels put it, 'the arts and even the religious ideas must be explained in the light of production of the means of material subsistence and not vice versa as has hitherto been the case'.

In the clear cut words of Benedetto Croce 'Homer had sung, Plato had philosophized, Jesus and Paul had transformed moral consciousness quite unaware that they were simply the instruments of an economic process to which all their work was ultimately reducible'. The ordinary man, not confused by jargon and dogmatism, will feel in his bones that this is a travesty of the truth and he is entitled to rest in that conviction, since neither Marx nor his successors have made any attempt whatsoever to prove this thesis by historical evidence.

This does not mean that the theory was without value. It represented, indeed, a healthy reaction against an exaggerated Great Man theory of history and against the tendency of historians before the time of Marx to ignore economic factors and concentrate unduly on political and dynastic changes. It erred only in its emphasis on inevitability and in its exclusion of the part played by man's individual intellect and will.

The second group of Marx's fifteen propositions on the interpretation of history, simply amount to this—from time to time the discovery of new productive forces makes the existing economic structure inadequate; those with vested interests resist the necessary change; and revolution follows. Revolutions are in fact always caused by economic factors, though men often persuade themselves that there are more spiritual causes. 'In order to understand such a revolution it is necessary,' says Marx, 'to distinguish between the changes in the conditions of economic production which are a material fact . . . and on the other hand the legal, political, religious, artistic and philosophic—in short, ideological forms in which men became conscious of the conflict and fight it out.'

Here again we have dogma without historical proof. Marx had, during his studies in Paris, become obsessed with the French Revolution, which may reasonably be considered to have been produced by economic causes. No serious student of English history would, however, admit that the Civil War or the Revolution had a primarily economic origin, or that either of those upheavals occurred because the forces of production had ceased to fit the economic structure of society. This generalization from the particular case of the French Revolution had no justification apart from the fact that it fitted in with Marx's general philosophy of history.

An interesting sub-head of this group of propositions was thus stated

by Marx—'No form of society can perish before all the forces of production which it is large enough to contain are developed and at no time will outworn conditions be replaced by higher conditions as long as the material necessities to their existence have not been hatched in the womb of the old society itself'. In other words the revolutionary may have to wait and even to assist in developing to its final stage the existing pattern of society. Even the Communist revolution cannot be brought about until bourgeois society has exhausted its possibilities, and some later Communists have recognized that a primitive society may have to go through the bourgeois stage before Communism can be achieved.

The third group of the fifteen propositions states that 'the present Capitalist conditions of production are the last antagonistic form of society.' It will be remembered that an essential element in the Marxist theory is that the history of society is the history of class struggles. Not only have these struggles actually taken place, but they were in fact inevitable, arising out of the very nature of things. Nevertheless, once socialism has been ushered in, the law of the dialectic will no longer operate since there will be no more contradictions. Class struggle will thus be at an end. Without any decision or act of will on our part, economic forces are, we are told, leading humanity on its pre-destined path to Communist equality and peace.

MARXIST ECONOMICS

Marx was mainly influenced in his philosophy by the Germans, in his view of the nature and causes of revolution by the French and in his economics by the British economists of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. In each case, however, he made such modifications of the original theory as to render it almost unrecognizable.

For two reasons his doctrine of the 'surplus value' and the connected theory has attracted more attention than it deserves. In the first place it is the main theme of *Das Kapital*, whereas the more important teaching regarding economic determinism and the materialistic conception of history is scattered throughout his earlier works. Secondly it leads up to the dynamic pronouncement that not only has the worker always been exploited by the capitalist, but that such exploitation is inevitable whether the capitalist likes it or not. It will, moreover, get worse as the system develops. The good or bad intentions of employers cannot deflect the operations of this law and Marx is full of contempt for the liberal reformers who would mend instead of destroying the system.

Unfortunately, his economic theories are often set forth in the most obscure language and there is the further difficulty that he is inconsistent in his definitions and in his use of terms such as value. Bertrand Russell illustrates these characteristics of Marx by the following quotation from *Das Kapital*—'Price is the money name of the labour realized in a commodity. Hence the expression of the equivalence of a commodity with the sum of money constituting its price as a tautology, just as in general the expression of the relative value of a commodity is the statement of the equivalence of two commodities. But although price, being the exponent of the magnitude of the commodity's value, is the exponent of the exchange value with money, it does not follow that the exponent of this exchange ratio is necessarily the exponent of the magnitude of value. . . . The possibility of a qualitative incongruity between price and magnitude of value or the deviation of the former from the latter, is inherent in the price form itself.' This sentence has a meaning for the student who is diligent enough to discover it, but it may be some time before he realizes that here Marx is using the term value in a sense nowhere clearly defined.

It is not necessary for our purpose to study Marx's economic propositions in great detail. It will be sufficient to state them briefly. His starting point is the classical economic principle that the exchange value of a commodity is proportionate to the amount of labour required to produce it. As used by the British economists this principle was merely a statement regarding the relative values of competitive commodities, but Marx magnified it into an abstract general principle which led him on to the dogma that labour is the sole creator of wealth.

The next proposition, really based on the theories of Malthus, of whom Marx thoroughly disapproved, is that since there will always be a surplus of labour, wages will be just sufficient to maintain the labourer and no more.

The third step in the argument is that the labourer produces more than is required for his maintenance—otherwise, of course, nobody would employ him—and the employer appropriates the surplus. Carew Hunt gives a clear account of this part of the Marxist theory—'What in fact happens is that a man works for ten hours and in the first, say, five of these (which constitute what Marx calls "socially necessary labour") he produces all the value he is to receive in wages. Of the value produced in the second five hours, he gets nothing and it is stolen from him by his employer. The difference between the value created during the period of socially necessary labour and that created during the period in excess of it,

is what Marx calls "surplus value" and is the measure of the worker's exploitation.'

The theory that the exchange value of a commodity is entirely due to labour (which he called 'variable capital') and that land, machinery and raw materials (which he called 'constant capital') contribute nothing, leads Marx into a dilemma. If variable capital is the sole creator of value, profits should fall when more machinery and less labour is employed. In fact this does not happen. Marx never escaped from this dilemma and his explanation many years later that though this thesis might not apply to a particular business, it would be true in general if applied to all the capital in the world, satisfied nobody. Marx in fact never extricated himself from the confusion which arose from his insistence that the labour content of a commodity, rather than supply and demand, determined its price and that labour was the sole source of value. He had to prove that the exploitation of labour was part and parcel of the capitalist system and for this purpose the theory of surplus value, in spite of its logical flaws, was indispensable.

The theory led him on to two further conclusions, the first of which was that the process of concentration of capital by means of the accumulation of the surplus value, would continue indefinitely. The capitalist would grow bigger and bigger. In a narrow sense this prophecy was correct, but it was impossible for Marx to foresee that the ownership of capital would become more and more diffused and that in the middle of the twentieth century a great concern like the I.C.I. would be owned, not by a few rich men, but by a very large number of shareholders. The connected proposition was that the position of labour would steadily deteriorate and that its poverty would become more and more abject. The whole course of subsequent history has falsified this prophecy, but Marx's conclusion was that the gulf between the capitalist and the rest of society would become so wide that revolution would be inevitable. Here again Marx was generalizing from the particular conditions of his own age of transition.

The importance of these speculations lies, however, not so much in the belief that revolution was bound to come, as in the idea—which would supply the motive force for the revolution—that the profit of the employer is nothing more or less than the result of exploitation of the surplus value of labour. This has in fact been the cornerstone of Communist economic theory. It arose naturally from the inhuman conditions of industrial employment in the early nineteenth century. With the growth of strong Trade Unions, the development of the Welfare State and the rise of a Managerial class responsible in many cases not to one or two proprietors but to a large body of stock-holders, it has become out of

date. It has, nevertheless, still retained a strong emotional influence and one must join Russell in regretting that the Marxist doctrine became crystallized as a result of the study of industrial England in the forties of the nineteenth century.

THE MARXIST OUTLOOK

For convenience of study we have dealt separately with the philosophy, the interpretation of history and the economic teaching of Karl Marx, but in reality they are merely three aspects of a single whole, which may be regarded as the Marxist outlook on life. That outlook may be summarized as follows. The course of human affairs is determined, not by human will or intellect, but by purely material factors. Economic laws make it certain that under the capitalist system the rich will grow richer and the poor poorer and that in due course the gulf will be so wide as to make revolution and the complete destruction of the system inevitable. This cannot happen in any country until the maximum possible development under the capitalist system has been achieved and when that stage is reached, revolution will take place whether men consciously will it or not. Nevertheless, it is necessary to incite the proletariat to rebel—presumably so that the process of revolution may be more rapid and less painful—and in any case, since the law of the dialectic makes it certain that all this will happen, wise men will be on the winning side. After the revolution, a classless society, free from the disharmonies and contradictions of the past will emerge and the State, as a coercive institution, will no longer be required.

It will be noticed that there is no place in this scheme for the ameliorating influence of benevolence and good will, or indeed for any of the ordinary human virtues. Man is for this purpose a mere machine, unaffected by moral or spiritual considerations, devoid of the power to control his own destiny and driven relentlessly along by economic forces.

If so harsh and unattractive a creed were proved up to the hilt, the ordinary man, with his ingrained belief in the power and worth of human goodness and kindliness, would accept it with the utmost reluctance. Fortunately he is not put to this test, since as we have seen, all Marx's main propositions are set forth as dogmas, unsupported either by logic or by historical evidence.

III

The Philosophy Revised

ORTHODOX MARXIST philosophy postulated three stages in the progress towards a Communist society. First, a liberal bourgeois revolution would break down the old feudal system; next must follow a long interval, during which the condition of the working classes would steadily deteriorate; and finally, when the capitalist system had achieved the maximum development of which it was capable, the proletariat would rise and destroy it. The Communist revolution would therefore occur, not in a backward country like Russia, but in a politically and economically advanced society.

So definite was this element in Marx's teaching that even when, late in 1917, the ineffectiveness of the Kerensky Government made a working-class rising inevitable, the Mensheviks declined to see in it a true Communist revolution. It did not conform to the textbook pattern and they must not identify themselves with it.

The Bolsheviks, under the influence of Lenin, took a more practical view. Lenin, in spite of his voluminous writing, was not primarily a theorist, but a thoroughgoing realist prepared to adjust the theory to fit the facts. A proletarian revolution was in process and it must be identified with Communism. For this purpose some glosses on the orthodox text were necessary, but in any case a new chapter in the Communist philosophy would have to be written. Karl Marx had carefully described the steps by which the revolution should be achieved, but had given no guidance as to what the proletariat should do after it had smashed the existing political and social system. Lenin's great *rôle* was to fulfil that need.

He set out to establish five main propositions, of which the first was that capitalist imperialism was on its death-bed and the time was therefore ripe for the proletarian revolution. This proposition was supported by three considerations. In the first place, capitalist rivalries had led to an era of suicidal imperialist wars; secondly, the rise of the colonial peoples was making the position of the imperialist powers untenable; and thirdly, the growth of powerful industrial trusts and monopolies so weighted the scales against the working classes as to leave them only with the alternatives of a revolution or abject surrender. Clearly they would choose revolution. Nevertheless, it was, according to Lenin, a distortion of

Marxism to believe that this would happen spontaneously. The vanguard of the working class must take the initiative—and where could this happen more naturally than in Russia, where anti-Tsarism had become identified with anti-imperialism?

This led to the second proposition—that the revolution need not necessarily begin in the country where industrialism was most advanced, but in the country which provided the weakest link in the imperialist chain—perhaps even where, as in Russia, the capitalist system was most backward. This appeared to be a considerable departure from the teaching of Marx, but Lenin justified it on the grounds that it was necessary to think in terms of the world-wide proletarian revolution rather than of the position in any particular country. If the capitalist, imperialist system as a whole was on its death-bed, the question was to where the revolution should begin was purely one of tactics.

The same tendency to move faster than Marxist theory would have indicated was apparent in another of Lenin's propositions, namely, that there need not be a time lag of many decades, as the orthodox had taught, between the bourgeois and the proletarian revolutions. The proletariat must indeed act quickly to overcome the vacillations of the bourgeoisie. Up to about 1870 capitalism was on an ascending curve. The bourgeoisie was a progressive force and it was natural for the workers to support it. From 1870 the curve flattened out and in the First World War started to descend. There could no longer be any question of an alliance between the workers and the bourgeoisie.

In these propositions, Lenin had merely explained the divergence between what was happening in Russia and what should, on pure Marxist theory, have occurred. His next two propositions, however, were more fundamental. The first was that the revolution must not just be an affair of the urban workers, but that the rural masses should be brought into closer alliance with them. Whereas in Western countries, the emancipation of the serfs had been brought about by the bourgeoisie, in Russia the big landholders were the powerful oppressors of the poor peasants, who had received no help at all from the bourgeoisie during the period of the Dumas. The peasants, who in West Europe were 'a reserve force for the bourgeoisie', were thus in Russia 'a reserve force for the proletariat'.

Lenin's next proposition was that the revolutionary State must be based, not on democracy, but on the dictatorship of the proletariat. Parliamentary institutions were derided as 'false and hypocritical—a paradise for the rich and a snare and deception for the poor'. Lenin soon came to realize that he would have to use the middle classes, but they were to have no

part in the governance of the State. 'The dictatorship of the proletariat must be a State that embodies a new kind of democracy *for* the proletariat and the dispossessed; and a new kind of dictatorship *against* the bureaucracy.'

A few years later Stalin was to explain this thesis even more frankly. 'The State,' he said, 'is an instrument in the hands of the dominant class used to break the resistance of the adversaries of that class . . . in this respect the dictatorship of the proletariat does not differ fundamentally from the dictatorship of any other class . . . the dictatorship of the proletariat is the rule of the proletariat over the bourgeoisie, a rule unrestricted by law, based upon force, enjoying the sympathy and support of the labouring and exploited masses.' Or again 'the theory of pure democracy . . . was formulated in order to plaster the sores of capitalism, to camouflage imperialism and to give the exploiters moral strength in their fight against the exploited masses.'

Having repudiated democracy in the wider sense, it was natural that Lenin should go on to insist that even the Communist party should not be open to all workers. It must be limited in numbers and centrally controlled. We shall consider this development in more detail a little later when we discuss the contribution of Stalin to Communist theory. Here it is sufficient to note that Lenin, with his innate distrust of democracy and freedom, laid the foundations on which Stalin was to build one of the most unqualified despotisms in history. In the process, Lenin had moved a long way from the teachings of Marx and Engels.

Stalin was not an intellectual and it is unlikely that he could have evolved the doctrines of Marx and Lenin. His contributions to modern Communist thought were the offspring of practical necessity and his own inflexible purpose. They were three in number. He developed the Leninist ideas of the supremacy of the State and the dominance of the Communist party to their logical conclusions; he established the theory of socialism in one country; and he destroyed the last vestiges of any belief in equality.

Stalin was acutely conscious that his belief in the all-powerful State appeared to conflict with the Marxist teaching that after the proletarian revolution the State would wither away. He defended his position by contending that it was necessary 'to keep on developing State power in order to prepare the conditions *for* the withering away of that power'. This argument may not have been very convincing, but a more practical consideration was that Russia, surrounded by hostile capitalist powers, must be strong in order to survive. A sufficiently rapid growth of military

and economic strength could only be achieved by a complete subordination of the individual to a totalitarian State.

In such a State, power could clearly not be entrusted to an unorganized and undisciplined proletariat and Stalin was inevitably led on to the proposition that 'the broad masses must be led and guided by the class-conscious minority of the Party'. This view fitted in with Stalin's inborn distrust of the people and was rationalized into the doctrine that the Party leadership must exercise all power, since it represents what the proletariat as a whole would want if it were sufficiently intelligent. The Party, in fact, must not limit its activities to 'a mere registration of the sufferings and thoughts of the proletarian masses'. It must rise superior to their transient interests and tell them what they ought to think. It must therefore be based on force. Its numbers must be limited; Party discipline must be severe; and even inside the Party there could be no dissidents. This theory was adopted in spite of the opposition of Trotsky, and as a modern writer has said, it was not long before the Communists ceased to be a free association of independent revolutionaries and submitted abjectly to an all-powerful party machine. Purges and a stern dictatorship were the logical outcome of the new system of thought.

No less important than Stalin's insistence on unquestioning obedience to the Party leader, was his belief in 'Socialism in one country'. In order to realize what a complete reversal of previous Communist teaching this involved, it is necessary to remember that the doctrine of the necessity of the World Revolution had both a theoretical and a practical foundation. Marx had pointed out that the greatest obstacle in the way of a proletarian revolution might be a determination of the bourgeoisie to achieve its own purposes quickly and have done with revolution as soon as possible. Communists, however, must always keep the pot boiling. Revolution must be a permanent state. There could, therefore, according to Trotsky and some others, be no question of halting at one particular stage of revolution and allowing time for consolidation before proceeding to the next stage. The process must be continuous. When therefore the Russian Communist revolution had been achieved, the principle of the permanent revolution demanded that it should at once be extended to the rest of the world. Lenin originally rejected this theory, but by 1917 it had been accepted and it had indeed obtained a central place in the Russian Communist creed.

More practical reasons soon led to the same conclusion. Orthodox Communists taught that the Capitalist and Socialist worlds were irreconcilable and that the Capitalist countries must surely seek to destroy the

Russian Communist State. The events of 1918 seemed to justify this belief. Russia had to fight for her existence and Trotsky's prophecy of 1906, that if the Revolution failed to spread from Russia to Western Europe it would be destroyed, appeared well founded. Trotsky himself was confident that in Germany at least a revolution was at hand and by 1919 even Lenin, who was by no means so optimistic, declared that 'world imperialism could not live side by side with a victorious Soviet revolution'. One must destroy the other.

In 1918 Stalin took a more realistic view of the possibilities in Western Europe than Trotsky. He declared bluntly that 'in accepting the slogan of revolutionary war we play into the hands of imperialism. There is no revolutionary movement in the West.' At a time when Russia was beset with capitalist enemies, it was nevertheless reasonable to accept the Party view that the Russian revolution could only survive if it spread in Western Europe, and even as late as in 1923 it seemed to Stalin that the organization of Socialist production could not be achieved in a peasant country like Russia 'without the joint efforts of the proletarians in several advanced countries'.

By 1924, however, his view was beginning to change, partly as a result of his quarrel with Trotsky and partly in response to changing conditions. Russia had been rescued from complete economic chaos by the New Economic Plan, while at the same time the attitude of the outside world had softened a good deal. Right-wing elements of the West were no longer clamouring for war with Russia, and even if Russia returned to the full-blooded socialism which had been temporarily abandoned under the New Economic Plan, it was unlikely that the Western countries would take action against her.

Late in 1924 Stalin therefore repudiated his earlier belief and rewrote the relevant paragraph in his *Foundations of Leninism*:

> 'It used to be supposed that the victory of the revolution in one country alone would be impossible, the assumption being that the conquest of the bourgeoisie could only be achieved by the united action of the proletarians of all advanced countries, or at any rate those in the majority of these. This contention no longer fits the facts. We must now set out by assuming the possibility of such a victory: for the varying speed of social evolution in different capitalist countries (proceeding in some, under imperialist conditions, by leaps and bounds); the development of catastrophic conflicts as the outcome of imperialist rivalries, inevitably culminating in wars; the growth of the revolu-

tionary movements in all countries throughout the world—these factors, working together, make proletarian victories in separate countries not merely possible but necessary.'

His biographer puts it more succinctly and tells us that in effect Stalin was saying that Russian Communism was able to stand on its own feet, to build and complete the building of socialism. This did not mean that Russian Communists should no longer aim at World-Revolution—they would, indeed, cease to be Marxists if they abandoned this aim. Nor did it imply a mellowing of their attitude towards the capitalist countries. It meant just what Stalin said. Whatever the outside world might do, Russia was capable of constructing her own society on purely socialist lines. 'Socialism in one country' soon became an essential element in the Party creed. To deny it was to court expulsion, or worse.

Stalin's third contribution to the philosophy of modern Communism was a frank repudiation of the second half of the old Communist slogan 'From each according to his ability to each according to his needs'. Marx himself had been somewhat equivocal on this subject. He had exposed the impracticability of the idea of equality, but he had temporized by suggesting that 'public service should be done at workmen's wages'. Lenin had taken a somewhat similar line and had laid down a maximum income for Party members.

Stalin was too practical-minded to regard this belief as a firm foundation for economic development. He took advantage of Marx's equivocation on this subject and as early as 1925 he declared that 'we must not play with the phrase about equality. This is playing with fire.'

In a speech in June 1931 Stalin came out even more boldly as an advocate of inequality. He attributed the rapid turnover of workers in important industries to 'an improper structure of wages' which was such as to 'destroy all difference between skilled labour and unskilled labour'. 'It cannot be tolerated', he said, 'that a locomotive driver on a railway should earn only as much as a copying clerk.' Again and again in this speech he emphasized the necessity of inequality and ended by affirming 'that our task is to . . . abolish equalitarianism'.

Only a well-trained theologian could rightly decide whether this was an adaptation of or a departure from Marxist teaching. The practical effect was that, according to the researches of Max Eastman, in 1937, 'the gulf between the remuneration of the lowest paid labour and that of the highest paid executive was far greater in the Soviet Union than in the United States'.

The Lenin-Stalin version of the philosophy of Communism was now complete. They had produced a system of thought suited to Russian conditions at the time, but very different from that laid down by Marx and Engels. They had abandoned the old ideas of equality, freedom, the withering away of the State and the necessity of an immediate world revolution. In their place they had put an all-powerful monolithic state; a highly stratified economic structure with vast gulfs between the rich and the poor; and socialism in one country. They had created a system of tremendous significance, but it had little relation to the concepts of the founding fathers of Communism. It was indeed based on a materialism altogether grimmer and starker than that of the Communist Manifesto and *Das Kapital.* Marx and Engels had at least been animated by a genuine sympathy for the poor and the downtrodden. Stalin and his colleagues cared only for the Revolution and the State and for 'progress' and for themselves as cold-blooded priests of these abstractions. The national income was all that mattered; the ordinary human being counted for nothing.

IV

The Revolution in Russia

THE RUSSIAN Revolution was not primarily the product of Communism, but was rather the result of the inadequacy of the Tsarist state, with its narrow and rigid bureaucracy, to meet the needs of the modern world. The logic of the Revolution was indeed simple. Widespread discontent urgently demanded radical reform; the obstinacy of the Tsar equated change with revolution; there was no strong middle class which could compel moderate, liberal reform; the only possibility, therefore, was for the urban working classes to smash the existing system. The upsurge of loyalty at the beginning of the First World War gave the Tsar one last chance. He did not take it and the misery resulting from the military and economic collapse of Russia in 1917 precipitated a working-class revolution. There would have been a revolution even if Communism had never been heard of, but as it happened the Communists were the only group of people who knew their own minds and were prepared to take advantage of a revolutionary situation.

It is necessary to glance briefly at the growth of the Russian Communist Party. The attempts of a liberal-minded Tsar in the middle of the nineteenth century to take the first steps towards the liberalization and modernization of Russia had failed. They had whetted but not satisfied the appetite of the educated classes for constitutional reforms and they had left many of the peasants worse off than before their emancipation. A party known as the Narodniks or the People's Party now came into being, the main aim of which was the establishment of collectively-owned rural communes. The party as a whole believed in constitutional methods, but some of its members advocated terrorism and worked up an atmosphere which led to the assassination of the liberal-minded Tsar Alexander II, and to the emergence of a class of fanatical, professional revolutionaries.

In the end this Party proved ineffective, but simultaneously another revolutionary party, working on principles very different from those of the Narodniks was developed, largely by Plekhanov, an exile from Russia. His group, which became the Russian Social Democratic Party, was founded in Brussels and London. Its members were true Marxists and had no faith in either the peasants or the middle classes. They stood for a working-class revolution. They were in tune with the times inasmuch as

there was a rapidly growing urban working class in Russia in the latter part of the nineteenth century, mainly as a result of heavy foreign investment. This late development of industry meant that advanced forms of organization were adopted and the resulting concentration facilitated the building up of working-class strength. At the same time, the foreign character of industry retarded the emergence of a Russian managerial class which might have provided an effective liberal force.

We may thus sum up the situation in the decade or so before the First War by saying that the Tsar was still absolute, the middle classes were ineffective, and the peasants were interested only in the land, but the working classes had grown rapidly in number, organization and strength. Conditions were thus propitious for the growth of the Social Democratic or Communist Party.

It is not necessary to follow the endless and wearisome discussions and altercations amongst the Social Democrats in the various countries in which they were scattered before 1917. We must, however, note first that the party newspaper ISKRA or the *Spark*, with which both Lenin and Trotsky were closely associated and which was regularly smuggled into Russia from abroad, became the focal point of Russian Communist thought. Its Editorial Board, in fact, formed the controlling committee of the party. Secondly, we must mention that in 1903 the party split into the Bolsheviks or majority group, and the Mensheviks or minority. Personal factions played a large part in the split, but the main issue between the two groups related to the organization of the party. The Bolsheviks, under Lenin's influence, would have kept it very limited in numbers and strictly controlled, while the Mensheviks wanted it to be broader based. There was a great deal of acrimony at this time between Lenin and Trotsky and the latter wrote bitterly and prophetically 'Lenin's methods led to this: the party organization at first substitutes itself for the party as a whole; then the Central Committee substitutes itself for the organization; and finally, a single dictator substitutes himself for the Central Committee'.

At this stage events in Russia called the emigrés home from their bickering. The Japanese War, which began with the attack on Port Arthur in February 1904, was unpopular from the start and became steadily more so as the continued failures of the Russians revealed the incompetence of the Tsarist régime. By the middle of the year the Army was demoralized and civilian discontent almost universal. The Minister of the Interior had perforce to agree to a conference of the Zemstvos or District Councils, in which freedom of speech and of association, a wider fran-

chise for the elections to the Zemstvos and other reforms were urged. The fall of Port Arthur in January 1905 deepened the prevailing discontent and Bloody Sunday, when troops opened fire on a peaceful procession led by Father Gapon for the sole purpose of presenting a petition to the Tsar, drove many loyal Russians into the camp of Trotsky and other revolutionaries who had just returned from abroad. Trotsky exploited this deplorable incident with great skill.

A few months later the complete defeat of the Russian Navy at Tsushima was followed by a mutiny of sailors, risings in Poland and the Baltic States, strikes in almost every trade and the murder of many police officers. In October 1905 a widespread subversive movement culminated in a general strike, which gave rise to the first Soviet—formed in Petrograd, not by the Bolsheviks but by the workers from fifty printing presses who elected delegates to Council. Other workers soon joined in and Lenin, still abroad, tried without much success to persuade his followers to support this Soviet. This body did not last long, but it provided an enduring pattern. The other important result of the strike was that the Tsar, thoroughly frightened, issued a Manifesto promising a Constitution, civil liberties and universal suffrage. The Manifesto was regarded, except by the Milyukov liberals, or Cadets, with a good deal of suspicion and Trotsky, tearing the Manifesto to pieces in front of a crowd, exclaimed 'today it has been given us and tomorrow it will be taken away and torn into pieces as I am now tearing it into pieces, this paper liberty, before your very eyes'.

The workers were not in fact ready for a revolution as distinct from a strike and soon grew tired of politics, while the Soviet had shown itself unable to take control of the revolutionary situation. The peasants were not interested and indeed helped to put down the urban rebels. By early 1906 the Revolution had petered out.

Trotsky was not entirely correct in his prediction as to the fate of the Constitution. The Duma survived and grew in importance. It carried on a continual struggle with the reactionaries, but it co-operated fully with the Prime Minister, Stolypin, in an important agrarian reform which, by giving the peasants permanent, consolidated holdings, went some way towards allaying rural discontent. Under its aegis government revenue increased, education was made widely available, the railways were considerably improved and developed and industrial progress was marked. The revolutionaries were in the doldrums and it might well have been thought that liberal influences would be strong enough to bring about gradual reform and make revolution unnecessary. Unfortunately, the

First World War and the character of the Tsar combined to make any such development impossible.

When War broke out, Trotsky saw it from a strictly Marxist angle as a rebellion of the forces of production against the constraints of capitalist nationalism, and envisaged a rallying of Socialists throughout Europe to overthrow their governments and achieve a democratic peace. In reality, the old revolutionary socialism in Western Europe was dead and the Socialist parties hastened to prove their patriotism and support their countries at war. In Russia, although the revolutionaries held aloof, amongst ordinary people there was a great upsurge of love for Russia and hatred of Germany. Strikes were called off and people flocked to the churches to pray for victory. The appearance of the Tsar on the balcony of the Winter Palace stirred up such emotion that 'most of the enormous crowd fell on their knees'. Similar enthusiasm infected the soldiers, who were thrilled to hear of the Tsar's strong desire to lead his armies in the field.

Unfortunately, it did not take long for the Tsar and his advisers, headed by the infamous Rasputin, to dispel these feelings. The Army would in any case have been heavily handicapped by antiquated methods and equipment, shortage of ammunition and guns, and lack of transport, but to those disadvantages were to be added incompetence in the military and civil administration.

The disasters to the Allied forces in Belgium and France induced the Russian Commander-in-Chief to take the offensive long before he was ready and the Russians were overwhelmingly defeated at Tannenburg and at the Masurian Lakes. Further defeats followed and casualties were enormous. The transport system broke down, the Army ran out of ammunition and arrangements for the care of the wounded were hopelessly inadequate. Demoralization was rapid and it has been stated that by 1916 there were over a million and a half deserters.

On the home front, the breakdown of transport and the inefficiency of the distribution arrangements led to a serious shortage of food supplies. The hardships of the civilian population were appalling. Discontent was widespread and faith in the Tsar was soon replaced by contempt and hatred for those who surrounded him, while the Tsar himself obstinately refused to meet even the most reasonable demands for a measure of reform. When the Duma met in November 1916, tremendous enthusiasm greeted a speech by Milyukov, the liberal leader, in which he made charge after charge against the Government; asking after each item—'Is this folly or treason?' Neither the reception of this speech, nor the assassination

of Rasputin, nor the many plots against his own life, induced any sense of reality in the mind of the Tsar.

The drama moved rapidly to its inevitable denouement and revolution broke out on March 8, 1917. It was not directly organized by Communist leaders, though they were quick to seize the opportunities it offered. It was, in fact, 'a movement of the people themselves—a boiling over of mass discontent'. Bread riots and strikes in support of wage claims suddenly took a more sinister turn. Police stations and Law Courts were looted and burned; prisoners were forcibly released from gaol; soldiers mutinied and authority ceased to exist. Regiment after regiment joined the workers. An almost leaderless revolution had been generated by spontaneous combustion. The Tsar in fact had ceased to rule and the only question was as to the form of government to succeed him. Before long the Tsar abdicated and the monarchy was put into cold storage until a Constituent Assembly could decide as to the future constitution. A provisional government with Prince Lvov as Prime Minister and Milyukov as his second-in-command was formed.

Neither Prince Lvov nor his successor Kerensky was capable of handling a revolutionary situation. The Petrograd Soviet, on the other hand, had been considerably strengthened by the return of Trotsky and Lenin from abroad and was soon able to force the Provisional Government to accept the famous Army Order No. 1 which practically abolished discipline in the army. Soviets on the Petrograd model now began to be formed all over Russia.

The Bolsheviks, however, soon suffered a setback as a result of a widespread belief that they were in German pay and an abortive revolt of workers, soldiers, sailors, carried out against Lenin's advice, further weakened their position.

A strong Government could almost certainly have crushed them, but Kerensky remained inactive, and the Bolsheviks rapidly regained their influence. By October, Russia was in a state of chaos. The food shortage was growing progressively worse; peasants were seizing and burning mansions in all quarters; the Army had suffered further defeats; and the Provisional Government, which still wished to continue the War against Germany, was considering the possibility of abandoning Petrograd to the enemy and moving to Moscow. Lenin and Trotsky now felt that the time for a Communist revolution was ripe.

The Mensheviks still considered a rising premature, but the Bolsheviks had command of the Petrograd Soviet and brushed aside all opposition. In October 1917 they formed a Military Revolutionary Committee,

which laid careful plans for action, and as a test of its authority, ordered the distribution of rifles from the arsenal to the civilian Red Guard. Their orders were obeyed and on October 24, Trotsky on behalf of the Military Revolutionary Committee issued Order No. 1. 'The Petrograd Soviet is in imminent danger. Last night the counter-revolutionary conspirators tried to call in Junkers and the shock battalions into Petrograd. You are hereby ordered to prepare your regiment for action. Await further orders. All procrastination and hesitation will be regarded as treason to the Revolution.'

On October 25,* the all-Russian Congress of the Soviets, in which the Mensheviks had a majority, met and debated the situation, but before their discussions were concluded, the Military Revolutionary Committee issued a proclamation that the Provisional Government had fallen and that power had passed to the Soviets. As a statement of fact this was premature, but it soon became true. The Communist Revolution had begun, but it was by no means certain what the outcome would be. In the country districts, soldiers and peasants alike were puzzled and uncertain what to do and an American journalist, John Reed, has written a graphic description of a meeting of an armoured car regiment when the issue was under discussion. 'Never', says Reed, 'have I seen men trying so hard to understand, to decide. They never moved, stood staring with a sort of terrible intentness at the speaker.' The Civil Servants in the cities were also divided and the railway workers definitely opposed the Bolsheviks.

Once again Kerensky and his colleagues hesitated and allowed their supporters to melt away. A few days later Kerensky abandoned the struggle and fled. Within ten days the Communist Revolution was over and the Bolsheviks were in power. The Council of People's Commissars, which had been appointed on the second day of the rising, now assumed the functions of government and it was soon clear that it had the support of the majority of soldiers and workers.

* Russian Calendar, old style.

V

Russia after the Revolution

COMMUNIST RULE in Russia falls naturally into four periods. First the years of War Communism ending in 1921; secondly the period of the New Economic Plan when Socialism was to some extent abandoned; thirdly the Stalin era; and finally the years after Stalin.

WAR COMMUNISM 1917–21

The hostility of the outside world, together with the unwisdom of the Communist leaders in seeking to establish a complete Socialist State overnight, made the four years of War Communism a desperate period. The new Government had three different sets of problems to face, relating respectively to external affairs, the governance of Russia and the reconstruction of the economy of the country.

The most urgent need was peace with Germany. Trotsky's obsession with the idea of an imminent Socialist revolution in Western Europe, together with his mistaken belief that he could maintain a state of neither war nor peace while that revolution gathered force, led to the rejection of the original German peace terms. The resumption of the German offensive and the subsequent separation of the Ukraine from Russia were disastrous for Russia. They were quickly followed by the Allied intervention and by the counter-revolution led by Kolchak and Denikin.

Those events had three permanent effects on Communist Russia. In the first place the dangerous situation which they created justified and even necessitated the use of drastic emergency powers and paved the way for an absolute dictatorship. Secondly—and this was particularly the case when Poland invaded the Ukraine in 1920—important sections of the Russian people united in a spirit of patriotism which enabled Trotsky, as Commissar of War, to rebuild the Army. This was perhaps Trotsky's greatest achievement. Not only had he to recruit, train and equip the Army. He had also to restore the discipline which the Bolsheviks had deliberately broken down in the days before the Revolution. So successful was he that by the end of 1920, Russia had at her disposal five million trained and disciplined troops.

Thirdly, the Allied intervention deepened the conviction that Communism and Capitalism could not co-exist in the world. Moreover, the failure

of the interventionists and the defeat of the Russian rebel forces gave the Bolsheviks a new consciousness of power. It seemed both possible and necessary to force Communism on the outside world.

The first effect of this new approach was seen when, after the Polish invasion of the Ukraine had been repelled, Russia tried to force a revolution on Poland. The attempt failed but it left a permanent impression on the Russian outlook. This impression was deepened when the Bolsheviks invaded Georgia, which had acquired independence during the Revolution and was under Menshevik control. Trotsky still contended 'that he who wants to carry revolution abroad on the point of bayonets, it were better for him if a millstone were hanged about his neck'—but the current of feeling was against him. The new idea had germinated and the fruit would be seen later.

The second main problem confronting the Bolsheviks concerned the future governance of Russia. Confident in their majority in the Soviet Congress, they saw no reason at first to cancel the decision taken by the Provisional Government to call a Constituent Assembly. The franchise for election to that Assembly was wider than that on which delegates to the Soviet Congress were elected and the peasants were an important element in it. In the event the Bolsheviks found themselves in a minority in the Constituent Assembly, the Cadets and the Right Social Revolutionaries being in a majority, and when, early in 1918, the Constituent Assembly refused to ratify Lenin's decrees abolishing the private ownership of land and transferring all the powers of Government to the Soviet pending the inauguration of the new Constitution, the Bolsheviks at once decided to put an end to the Constituent Assembly. There was surprisingly little public protest against this action. The rule of the Soviets was in fact recognized as having come to stay.

It must be emphasized here that membership of the Soviets was not confined to the Bolsheviks and there was at this stage no suggestion of banning opposition parties. As the years passed, however, the Bolsheviks began to feel uncertain of their own position. As we shall see later, Trotsky's severe regimentation of important sections of labour during the Civil War provoked widespread resentment. At the same time, dislocation of trade and industry, followed by the appalling famine of 1921, reduced many millions of Russians to a state of hopeless misery. It was clear to the ordinary man, whether urban worker or peasant, that in spite of all the golden promises of 1917, he was now far worse off than before the Revolution—and naturally he blamed the ruling party for his troubles.

The Kronstadt mutiny was only a symptom of the general discontent. The Bolshevik rulers had lost the support of the workers, while the peasants, having achieved their ambition of becoming the individual owners of their land, were not at all attracted by the theories of the Communists. It was clear that any kind of democratic process would result in the complete defeat of the Bolsheviks, which would be followed by utter chaos. In 1921, Lenin therefore banned all organized opposition within the Soviets. Non-Bolshevik members might individually criticize the Party, but might not group themselves together for this purpose.

A little later, freedom of expression even inside the Party was found to be unsafe. A process of screening was therefore undertaken. About one-third of the membership was expelled and there was a promise of further expulsion to come. Freedom of discussion was effectively stifled and all power quickly passed into the hands of the few leaders of the Party. For a time Trotsky was the odd man out, and after Lenin's death he was soon suppressed by Stalin, Zinoviev and Kamenev, who became the real rulers of Russia. These developments took place some years after the period of War Communism, but the seed from which they grew was the prohibition of organized opposition in 1921.

The third task facing the Bolsheviks immediately after the Revolution was to rebuild the shattered Russian economy and here they were handicapped by their own Marxist theories and by the expectations which their teachings had aroused amongst workers and peasants. Lenin and some of his colleagues entertained considerable doubt as to whether public ownership of industry was yet practicable or not—but in many cases the workers had already seized the factories and the Bolsheviks had no option but to sanction a *fait accompli* and proceed to nationalize industry. Manufacture was controlled by Committees of factory hands. Piece work was abolished and in the absence of any supervision or discipline, a system under which payment did not depend even indirectly on results led to a spectacular fall in output. Production fell to about one-sixth of pre-revolution levels.

In the villages the peasants had already seized the land and their action was now validated by law. The break up of the large estates necessarily meant a fall in production. Twenty-five million smallholdings, unsupported by capital or modern appliances, could not feed Russia and a severe shortage of food was inevitable.

To make matters worse, all private trade was abolished and private shops were closed. Not unnaturally, the Government channels of distribution, which had to be improvised hastily, were hopelessly inefficient

and inadequate. Since the factories could not supply him with consumer goods, the peasant had no incentive to produce more than he and his family needed, and conversely, factory hands saw no point in working if they could not obtain food and clothing in reasonable quantities. Many of them left the towns for the country in the hope of obtaining food and it is estimated that three years after the Revolution, urban workers in Petrograd numbered only about one-third of those employed in 1916. Trotsky himself tells us that the Kulak cut down his sowings, that industrial production fell to one-fifth of the pre-war level and that 'the collapse of the productive forces surpassed anything of the kind that history had ever seen. The country and the Government with it were on the edge of the abyss'.

Desperate remedies were tried in vain. The 'poor peasants' were charged with the duty of collecting grain levies from the Kulaks by force; factory hands were often paid in kind; and in some industries labour was put under military discipline. Trotsky indeed proposed the militarization of all labour. His proposal was rejected, but troops were employed in the mines and in certain important industries.

By 1921 the people of Petrograd and Moscow were living on a daily food ration of two ounces of bread and a few frozen potatoes, and were entirely without fuel. The situation was so serious that only two courses were open to the Government. Either Trotsky's scheme of universal compulsion must be accepted and drastically enforced, or Marxist theories must be abandoned for the time being. The Bolsheviks chose the latter alternative and in March 1921 Lenin introduced the New Economic Policy, which amounted to a virtual suspension of the Marxist economic programme.

THE NEW ECONOMIC POLICY

Under the New Economic Policy private trade was again permitted, and at the same time the peasant was allowed, after paying a heavy tax on grain, to sell his surplus freely, or to keep it for himself. The old channels of trade soon began to operate again, or as Trotsky put it 'the market, legalized by the New Economic Policy began with the help of an organized currency to do its work'. From a Communist of long standing, this tribute to the value of a sound monetary system reads strangely, but the rapidity with which the economy began to recover could not be gainsaid. In 1922, the harvest was up to about three-quarters of the pre-war figure, while a contemporary observer reports that shops and cafés reappeared in

the towns as if by magic. By the end of that year three-quarters of the retail trade was in private hands.

At the same time, the re-establishment of private industry was encouraged, the theory being that the public and private sectors would flourish side by side, and that since Government would hold the 'commanding height' of large scale industry, the State would in any event be able to control the national economy. Industry, however, recovered more slowly than agriculture and the increasing purchasing capacity of the peasant led to a rapid rise in the prices of consumer goods, against which in turn the peasant protected himself by refusing to buy. The Government was ready to do almost anything at this stage to induce the peasant to increase his crops and in 1925 was compelled to reduce the grain tax.

Gradually industry, too, began to revive and by 1926 production had again reached the pre-war level. There was, however, a certain lack of balance about this revival. In the first place light industry had developed much faster than the heavy industry on which it depended for renewal and repairs of machinery. Secondly, a serious gap remained between industrial and agricultural prices and Trotsky wrote of the 'scissors' which were likely to cut the economic link between the industrial workers and agriculturists. In his view, this double imbalance could only be corrected by overall 'planning', but the Bolsheviks had had such a lively experience of the disastrous results of comprehensive State control that they were still most unwilling to limit the freedom which industry and agriculture had regained under the New Economic Policy. Russia had in fact been rescued by that policy from economic chaos and indeed from starvation.

The partial abandonment of socialism which was completed in the New Economic Policy was not accompanied by any relaxation or decentralization of authority. The Soviets, in which power nominally resided, had become completely dominated by the Party, which in its turn was controlled by a few leaders, of whom Stalin was soon to become the most important. Stalin had none of the brilliance of Lenin or Trotsky, both of whom in their later years distrusted him. He was, however, a born organizer and a prodigious worker, willing to do the dull administrative jobs that nobody else wanted. In 1922 he was appointed to the new post of Secretary-General, charged with the organization of the Party and all its Branches. He retained his membership of the Politburo which has been described as the brains trust of Bolshevism, and was also Commissar of the Workers and Peasants Inspectorate, set up to deal with abuses in the administration. This concentration of authority enabled him to put his

own supporters into all key posts and after the death of Lenin in 1923, Stalin set to work to draw all the threads of the organization into his own hands.

Although opposition, even inside the Party, had been banned, there were factions inside the Politburo itself. Stalin had to contend with two groups of dissentients in that body, who resented his increasing assumption of authority. The 'left-opposition' headed by Zinoviev demanded spectacular industrialization and heavier exactions from the peasants; and radically disagreed with Stalin's new theory of 'socialism in one country'. Stalin began to undermine their authority and his complete control of the Party machine made success certain. Zinoviev and Kamenev were soon forced to recant and by 1927 they had ceased to count.

The right oppositionists were tolerated for a while, since their pro-peasant attitude suited Stalin's policy during the period of the New Economic Policy.

Although lip service continued to be paid to it, by 1927 Marxism had in fact been put into cold storage. The main elements of the Marxist system of economics and politics are internationalism, democracy, state-ownership and the classless society. Every one of these concepts had been tried and rejected in the first decade of the Bolshevik revolution. They had been replaced by Chauvinism, oligarchy, a considerable volume of private enterprise and growing social and economic inequalities. A great experiment in Communism had in fact ended in failure and disaster.

THE STALIN ERA

It is not easy to describe briefly the quarter of a century during which Stalin dominated Russia. In that period he forced the collectivization of agriculture; he rejected the Communist doctrine of social and economic equality; he built up a great bureaucracy and technocracy; he inspired the Russian people with an aggressive nationalism; and he transformed Russia into a great industrial country. In the process he established a tyranny perhaps more cruel and monstrous than any known to history. Russia was used to absolute monarchy, but the Tsars left important aspects of life untouched and were to some extent restrained by religion and custom. Stalinism impinged on life at every point and had no inhibitions. At the end of the Stalin era, Russia was larger and more powerful than before and certain important sections of her people lived better than their forebears under the Tsars. Others—particularly the peasants, the deportees and the inmates of the forced labour camps, who numbered many millions

—were even worse off than before the Revolution. All alike had lost the last vestige of freedom.

We must examine some of these matters in detail and it will be convenient to begin with the regimentation of the peasants. As we have seen, socialism had been partially abandoned under the New Economic Policy, but the return to it was announced on the tenth anniversary of the Revolution when Stalin proclaimed as his policy the collectivization of agriculture and the rapid development of industry under the ownership of the State. It was clear from the start that the peasants would strongly resist attempts to merge their individual holdings—newly won as they were—into collective farms under officially appointed managers. Stalin's first intention was to proceed slowly. The First Five Year Plan only envisaged twenty per cent collectivization by 1933. Nor did Stalin yet appear to think in terms of expropriation of the *Kulaks*, or richer peasants, who were alleged to be responsible for the food shortage of 1928. As, however, he became more certain of his own authority, his attitude hardened and before the end of 1929, he issued his famous order 'Strike hard at the Kulaks'. At the same time the demand for collectivization was intensified and attempts were made to incite the poor peasants against the Kulaks and to bribe them with the promise that the livestock of the Kulaks would be made over to the collective farms. Persuasion and bribery largely failed, and Stalin—who had by now smashed the right-wing opposition and established himself as virtual dictator—began to use force on a gigantic scale. Unwilling middle-class peasants were driven wholesale into collective farms and several million Kulaks were deported into new industrial sites in remote areas. The policy met with stubborn resistance from the middle peasants and the Kulaks alike. Crops were burned and cattle were sold wholesale as an act of defiance, and within two years, as Stalin himself admitted some years later, fifty per cent of all the horses and two-thirds of all the sheep and goats in Russia were destroyed. In March 1930 Stalin was forced to recognize that he had gone too far. In a famous article in *Pravda*, under the caption 'Dizzy with Success', Stalin put the blame firmly on the subordinates who, intoxicated with success, had been so foolish as to apply forcible methods to the middle peasants. The process was now deliberately slowed down and whereas fifty per cent of holdings were collectivized by 1930, only a further ten per cent were thus transformed by the end of the Five Year Plan period in 1933.

Many concessions were now granted to peasants who joined the collective farms or *Kolhozes*. Formerly they had been treated simply as day

labourers, paid a fixed wage and with no separate property. Now they were allowed to cultivate small areas of land for themselves, to keep a limited number of livestock and to enjoy a share in the profit made by the collective farms. At the same time many of the Government farms were broken up and their lands were made over to the collective farms. Concession and propaganda succeeded where force had failed and before long collectivization was virtually completed.

The wholesale destruction of cattle necessitated the mechanization of agriculture and this was now given a high priority in the Plan. In 1934 Stalin claimed that two million peasants had been trained as tractor drivers and in 1936 it was stated that there were nearly 5,000 machine tractor stations. Mechanization was accompanied by attempts to run the *Kolhozes* almost on disciplined factory lines and the same process was carried to its logical conclusion after the Second World War, when many collective farms were amalgamated into giant units having 'agricultural cities' rather than villages as their centre. These agricultural cities, the success of which would have involved the surrender by the peasant of his own private land, were a failure and before long they were abandoned. The collective farms remained firmly established, but they do not appear to have fulfilled the expectations of the Communist planners. Even as late as 1954, Khrushchev admitted that their production of grain per head was less than before the Revolution and that there had been an absolute decline in the number of livestock. The collectivization was, however, an integral part of the general regimentation of life which was the essence of Stalinism. The peasants had ever less and less voice in the management of the collective farms and were indeed being gradually transformed into factory hands. Whether electricity and improved medical facilities compensated for this loss of freedom or not is a matter of opinion.

The mechanization of agriculture fitted well into the programme or industrialization which was the second element of Stalin's policy. In that programme, thanks to a mixture of brutality, genuine enthusiasm and a frank abandonment of the Communist belief in equality, Stalin was remarkably successful, but the need to drive people beyond what was reasonable led inevitably to a ruthless tyranny. In the first Five Year Plan targets were fixed so high that nobody within or without Russia believed that they could be reached. When at the end of the first two years, it seemed as if failure were probable, Stalin set the targets still higher and declared 'It is impossible to reduce the tempo . . . the backward are always beaten'.

This kind of emotional appeal met with a genuine response, but Stalin

was not prepared to rely only on patriotic feeling. Terror played a large part in his scheme. Managers who failed to achieve their targets were treated as traitors; trade unions were deprived of freedom and converted into task-masters; women and children were forced to undertake heavy manual labour; and vast armies of peasants were conscripted for industrial work, for which they had no aptitude or inclination, hundreds of miles away from their homes. The price of progress in terms of human suffering was high and the concentration of effort on heavy industry necessarily meant that living conditions deteriorated rapidly.

In the period of the second Five Year Plan, Stalin learned to use the carrot as well as the stick. It is not easy to take a balanced view of some aspects of these developments. Russian workers were easygoing and it was natural and perhaps reasonable for the Communists to hold up to them the example of Stakhanov, who in one shift produced fourteen times as much coal as was customary. The exception, however, soon became the norm and since unions were no longer the protectors of the workers, men, women and children were driven past endurance. Those who could stand the pace became 'heroes of the production front' and received every possible reward, while those who lagged behind were liable to severe penalties.

The principle of equality had been completely abandoned, and Lenin's dictum that nobody should earn more than a skilled labourer was quietly forgotten. With the passing of the years the economic and social gap between different classes grew continually and a position was soon reached in which the disparities of income between rich and poor, after allowance is made for taxation, were greater in Russia than in England. A vast new army of technologists was called into being and they, along with the higher rungs of the bureaucracy, formed the privileged classes. Even in the Party itself, the proletariat began to count for less and less and at a time when social and economic gulfs were being narrowed in Western Europe, they widened considerably in the Fatherland of Communism.

As a result of the combination of terror, inducement and privilege and the tremendous driving force which emanated from Stalin himself, production and the national economic strength grew in a way that even the most fervent Communist of 1927 could never have dreamed possible. Under normal circumstances this kind of drive could not have been kept up for ever and by about 1939 a stage had been reached when some relaxation of the pressure and some diversion of energy to the production of consumer goods was required. At this stage the War interfered with

the programme and put things back, perhaps ten years. After the War, Stalin became obsessed with the idea that Russia must catch up to America in military as well as industrial strength. The drive for more production was intensified and the pace was breathless. By the last year of Stalin's life the system began to pay dividends. Consumer goods appeared on the market in larger quantities and there was some improvement in the standard of living. In the twenty-five years of the Stalin era, Russia had become a great industrial nation and the number of people living in towns and cities had trebled.

These developments had been accompanied—and to some extent caused—by a revival of nationalism and a renewed respect for the past history of Russia. In theory, Communism cuts across national boundaries and it was certainly the belief of the founders of the Russian Revolution that it should do so. The failure of the working classes of Western Europe to accept Communism led to a Russian desire to impose it on the world by force. Their inability to do this, combined with the hostility of the non-Communist countries led Russia to draw aloof from the rest of the world, but as Russia became conscious of its new-found power, aloofness gave way to a sense of superiority and then to jingoism. The new mood was reflected in an article in *Pravda* in December 1936. 'The Soviet land is great and mighty, without boundaries, joyous and happy . . . even the air of the Soviets is holy to us.'

Once again the past began to matter. History was reintroduced as a university subject and the old Russian heroes were restored to honour. Even the notorious battles of the Tsars again began to be commemorated and Ivan the Terrible was a central figure in a film in which, according to a contemporary writer, Stalin himself took a great interest. This new-found respect for tradition had its effect in several surprising directions. Discipline in the Army was tightened; the importance of family ties was once more emphasized; and greater toleration was shown to the Church.

What might otherwise have been a move towards liberalism was, unfortunately, marred by the glorification of the State which accompanied the revival of nationalism. The Marxist conception of the withering away of government was replaced by a view of the State as the highest embodiment of Communist thought; the end for which the individual lived. Even art and learning could be judged only by the extent to which they subserved that end. Zdhanov, the archpriest of this new movement, who has been described as the 'chief engineer of the soul', applied to everything the test of what he called 'socialist realism'. Historians were

warned against attaching undue importance to foreign influence on Russian history; scientists were liable to punishment if they supported Western as against Russian theories; musicians were censured for cosmopolitanism; and cultural life was controlled at all points.

This glorification of the State still further exalted the position of Stalin —in whose hands all power was concentrated after the liquidation of the pro-peasant right wing party led by Ryan and Bukharin—and made it possible for him to embark on the vast and ruthless purges of the middle thirties with which his name will always be associated. The most damning evidence as to the reign of terror comes not from non-Communist sources, but from Khrushchev's secret report to the Twentieth Congress in 1956. Whatever may have been Khrushchev's motive in his denigration of Stalin, he was reporting on facts within the personal knowledge of his audience, and there can be no question as to the substantial accuracy of his charges. A few quotations from this Secret Report will suffice for our purpose.

'Stalin acted not through persuasion, but by imposing his concept and demanding absolute submission to his opinions. Whoever opposed his concept was doomed to removal . . . and to subsequent moral and physical annihilation.'

Khrushchev goes on to explain how Stalin used the concept 'enemy of the people' to justify action against all who disagreed with him and how frequently the charge of being an enemy of the people was based only on a confession extorted by force.

'Many thousands of honest and innocent Communists had died as a result of the monstrous falsification of such cases and as a result of the fact that all kinds of statements and concessions were accepted and as a result of the practice of forcing accusations against oneself and others.'

'Brutal treatment was practised against leading party workers. . . . When the cases of some of these so-called spies and saboteurs were examined, it was found that all their cases were fabricated, confessions of guilt of many arrested and charged with enemy activities were gained with the help of cruel and inhuman torture.' 'Arbitrary behaviour by one person', Khrushchev continues, 'encouraged and permitted arbitrariness in others. Mass arrests and deportations of many thousands of people, executions without trial and without normal investigation, created conditions of insecurity, fear and even despair.'

Khrushchev states also that of 139 members and candidates of the Central Committee elected at the Seventeenth Congress in 1934, no fewer than ninety-eight were shot. Evidence from other sources shows that six

members of the Politburo itself were shot without trial and many hundreds of minor Party officials simply disappeared without publicity.*

The evidence as to the character of Stalin's régime is indeed beyond dispute. The difficulty is to guess at the motive forces at work in his mind. Fear, and the need for scapegoats who could be blamed for failure, were amongst these but other more laudable factors were also present. The odium which rightly attaches to Stalin's name throughout the civilized world must not obscure the fact that he was a man inspired by a great vision of a powerful and prosperous Russia.

His vision, however, was the narrow one of the materialist and it is not difficult to see that Stalinism was not just a historical accident resulting from Stalin's own personality, but was the logical outcome of Communist teaching. The philosophy of Karl Marx, though harsh and materialistic, had to some extent been relieved and softened by an emotional and semi-idealistic element. Unfortunately, that element was hopelessly unpractical and was necessarily discarded as soon as the Bolsheviks tried to put Marxism into operation. They were left with a stark materialism which made economic progress the sole criterion of good or evil. Men must at all costs be driven on to prosperity, and obviously only the Party could provide the driving force. The orthodox view of the Party must never be challenged and even apart from the ambition of individuals, heresy hunting was bound to lead to the exercise of control by an ever narrowing caucus. Dictatorship was the natural conclusion of this process and since Marx himself had long ago rejected moral ideas as 'bourgeois', it is not surprising that Stalin should have had nothing but contempt for the rights and lives of individuals. There were thus no limitations of conscience on what the dictator might do in the mad chase after national wealth and in the course of his own paranoia. All could be justified by cogent arguments based on the original theses of the founders of Communism.

* This report was not published by the Russian authorities but the U.S.A. State Department obtained a copy of it and published it. Its authenticity has never been challenged and it has in fact been accepted by Communists all over the world as correct.

VI

Russia under Khrushchev*

IN SPITE of the conflict of evidence, much of it biased in one direction or another, it is at least clear that conditions of life in the U.S.S.R. have undergone a great transformation since 1953. Even before the death of Stalin, forces which would make a change inevitable were strongly at work. A whole new class of industrial bureaucrats and technicians had been called into existence and it was not to be expected that a society which was turning out 50,000 engineers a year would be as docile as the old illiterate Russia of two or three decades earlier. Some of the new men directed the world's greatest industrial enterprises, and thousands of others had had their intellectual curiosity aroused by prolonged scientific or technological education.

By about 1951 a spirit of discontent was abroad, not only amongst the young technocracy, but also amongst the writers and intellectuals. Illegal news-sheets and critical articles began to appear surreptitiously and in the prison camps strikes and mutinies were frequent. These manifestations were, of course, put down with merciless severity wherever possible, but it was more difficult to dragoon the millions of discontented peasants who had begun to put up an effective passive resistance against the policy which deliberately kept them at an appallingly low economic level.

It has been suggested by some competent observers that Stalin was profoundly disquieted by these symptoms and that the fabrications regarding the doctors' plot were intended as the prelude to a new wave of terror, in which the great purges of 1936 would be repeated. Be this as it may, only a universally feared, supremely self-confident dictator could have continued to clamp down on the growing discontent. After the death of Stalin no individual was powerful enough to fill this *rôle* and in the period of collective government when Malenkov, Molotov, Beria and Khrushchev jockeyed for position, considerable relaxation of the grip of government on the country was inevitable. It was in this period that the slight degree of freedom generally known as the Thaw was introduced, while at the same time thousands were released from the forced labour

* This chapter is based on a study of a large number of reports by observers, friendly and unfriendly to the U.S.S.R. To some extent it follows the lines taken in Edward Crankshaw's excellent book *Khrushchev's Russia.*

camps, and the security police were brought under control. In the economic sphere, important concessions were made to the peasants, and government set to work seriously to make more consumer goods available to improve the standard of living. The credit for these improvements must go largely to Malenkov.

KHRUSHCHEV'S RISE TO POWER

It is not necessary for our purpose to follow the manoeuvrings by which Khrushchev ousted his rivals. It is sufficient to say that though by 1957 he had become the undoubted master, his position has never been comparable to that of Stalin. As Crankshaw puts it, 'Stalin was Frankenstein to the Soviet Union. In so far as he aspired to be an absolute and arbitrary dictator Khrushchev (or anybody else) would find himself reduced to the *rôle* of the sorcerer's apprentice.' He is nevertheless supreme and the process by which he manipulated the Party and Government machinery to secure this position, is not without interest.

In his later years Stalin had been served by two largely separate bureaucracies. There were the professional politicians who controlled the mechanism of the Party and there were the men who ran the vast State-owned industries or carried on the administrative functions of government. The men of this latter class might or might not be Party members, but they were as a rule not zealots and cared more for their work in industry or administration than for Communist theory. They grew in importance with the passing of the years and by 1950 it could safely be said that they were more powerful than those who had given their lives to the organization of the Party. The Party was in fact almost moribund.

This mattered little while Stalin was alive, but after his death Khrushchev soon realized that real power might easily pass into the hands of the State and industrial bureaucracy. He set himself, therefore, to renew the power of the Party at the expense of its rivals. There was much talk of reviving the spirit of Lenin. This meant simply that Khrushchev set to work to cloak himself in the mantle of Lenin's authority. He rekindled enthusiasm, he fought against the corruption which was corroding all aspects of Soviet life and he placed his own trusted men in key positions in the Party. It soon became his reliable instrument. The big bureaucrats of state industry still had to be brought more firmly under control and this purpose was served by the decentralization of industry on which Khrushchev embarked in 1957. It is not necessary to believe that the

primary purpose of this change was political. Decentralization and rationalization were indeed long overdue and nobody could dispute Khrushchev's statement that the machinery was choking itself and that two hundred thousand industrial establishments could not be controlled from Moscow. Crankshaw's description of the system is so admirable as to justify quotation:

> 'All production in the Soviet Union was controlled by more or less specialized production ministries with their headquarters in Moscow: ministries for steel, for coal, for oil, non-ferrous metallurgy, chemicals, shipping, heavy machinery, medium machinery (a euphemism for atomic development), timber, electric power, electric power stations (Malenkov's province after his fall in 1955), machine tools, food production, agriculture, State farms, light industry, and so on and so on. These ministries became empires. The Minister for Steel Production, for example, controlled enterprise and output larger by far than any Krupp, larger by far than any individual steel tycoon in the United States or than the Chairman of the Iron and Steel Board in Britain. He was responsible for everything to do with steel production, and yet he was constantly vulnerable to the monstrous bottlenecks and failures of proper liaison inherent in the centralized planning system. He was responsible for fulfilling his Ministry's Plan and was committed *by law* to produce so many million tons of finished steel each year. His obvious course was to insulate his steel industry as completely as possible from the effects of all outside accidents and failures. And this he did. He found it expedient to manufacture much of his own specialized machinery, to build his own workers' houses, to develop his own transport networks—regardless of what his colleagues in other ministries were doing. By the time of the Khrushchev reorganization it was possible to envisage a future in which the Minister of Steel would be mining his own coal and building his own railways and his own river fleet in order to be entirely self-sufficient. And the same was true of other ministries.'

Red tape multiplied to an extent unparalleled even in the Office of Circumlocution and the system was in fact becoming unworkable. In 1957 Khrushchev abolished it with the stroke of a pen and in the course of seven weeks set up one hundred and five Regional Economic Councils. Each Council was to be completely responsible for every branch of industrial production in its area. Moscow would lay down the general policy and the Regional Chairman would carry it out. There can be no

doubt that the change was thoroughly sound, but it also had great political advantages from Khrushchev's point of view. The industrial bureaucrats had lost their great commercial empires and found themselves working in remote areas where they were quickly brought under the control of Party officials, who in turn were controlled by Khrushchev. Once again the Party became the seat of practical authority and the Party was Khrushchev.

ECONOMIC PROGRESS

One of the outstanding features of the Khrushchev régime has been its success in improving economic conditions for the average man and nowhere has this been more marked than in the villages. We have already seen how at one time, Stalin deliberately kept the peasants at subsistence level and how his forcing of the process of collectivization defeated its own purpose. During the War, many of the collectives virtually disintegrated and the land was resumed by their former peasant owners. After the War the lands were taken back and the collectives were rehabilitated, but peasant resistance revived. Production fell far below the target set, deliveries of grain to the towns were inadequate and attempts to augment the livestock population were so half-hearted that even as late as 1952 there were less cattle in the U.S.S.R. than there had been twenty-five years earlier. This might not have mattered much if the Soviet claims regarding the mechanization of agriculture had been justified. In fact, the number of tractors and other types of agricultural machinery was far too small for the needs of the country. More serious still, on account of the lack of spare parts and the low standards of maintenance, a large proportion of them were continually out of use. Altogether the state of the villages when Khrushchev achieved power was appalling.

He at once set himself to provide the peasant with the incentive to produce more. Deliveries to the Government were fixed at more reasonable levels and the cultivator was able to sell his surplus production in the free market. Khrushchev next turned his attention to the proper feeding of cattle. Every farm in the U.S.S.R. was directed to cultivate maize on a certain proportion of its area. Many localities were unsuited to this particular crop and much effort was wasted, but over a considerable part of the country a new cattle fodder was thus made available, and above all, the campaign 'shook the peasants out of their slovenly ruts and gave them the idea that with better feeding for livestock there would be more and better meat and milk and butter'. Unbelievable though it may

seem on the part of the great Russian dictator, Khrushchev stumped the country himself, giving practical advice to farmers. He compelled his often reluctant lieutenants to do likewise. Intelligent young men were drafted into the villages to inject new life into them and the whole machinery of the state was geared to the task of increasing agricultural production.

The next move was the opening up of a vast new area in the south west of Siberia and in the adjoining state of Kazakhstan. A large number of state farms were established there, three hundred and fifty thousand volunteers were settled in that area—and some of them may have been genuine volunteers—and an area of over one hundred thousand square miles was brought under cultivation.

Khrushchev's rural plans have, however, not proved uniformly successful. His dream of a U.S.S.R. in which the countryside would be divided into a number of very large state-owned agricultural units, with farmers turned into something like factory hands, has not been fulfilled; nor has he been able to overcome the carelessness, improvidence and occasional drunkenness of the Russian peasant. It is true that in 1956 production of food grains broke all records and that in spite of the extensive drought in 1957 Russia suffered no serious foodgrain shortage. Since then, however, there have been setbacks. The production target fixed for 1960 has had to be relegated to 1965 and transport facilities have proved inadequate for the fulfilment of the schedule of deliveries. Livestock, too, have been a cause for anxiety. Calves which would normally have been fattened for killing in the spring of 1961 were in many cases slaughtered prematurely because of the inadequate supplies of cattle fodder. Even more serious is the fact, stated quite frankly by government, that many good bulls were slaughtered last year in order that collectives might carry out their obligations to provide stated quantities of meat. As a result many cows remained unserved. Several millions of sheep are also reported to have died last year for lack of fodder and shelter. Not even Khrushchev has in fact been able to make agricultural collectives into efficient units of production.

Russia's industrial progress in recent years is too well known to require detailed discussion here, but a few points must be made. Firstly, Khrushchev's decentralization of industry did not mean any abandonment of the idea of planning, which is in fact fundamental in Communist thought. It meant simply that the many competing Ministries in Moscow which formerly controlled industry have now been replaced by the State Planning Commission, which keeps a tight hand on the regional councils, and

through them on every factory and workshop. Industry is indeed more integrated than before Khrushchev. Secondly, there has been a change in the direction of more consideration for the consumer, to some extent at the expense of heavy industry. This trend must not be exaggerated. All the evidence shows that clothing is more plentiful than it was, but it is unbelievably drab. Bicycles, clocks, vacuum cleaners and other articles capable of mass production are on the market, but there appears to be no consideration for individual preference. That experienced observer, John Gunther, tells us that people in Russia yearn for prettier and gayer things, but have to content themselves with the statement that only by limiting production to standardized products can the factory manager fulfil his 'gross output plan'.

Thirdly, whatever may be the case in consumer industries, the development in heavy industries—coal, petroleum, electrical power, iron and steel, cement and the like has been phenomenal. Khrushchev's aim of catching up with the U.S.A. by 1972 may not be realistic, but the gross national product of the U.S.S.R. is reliably reported to be already over forty per cent of that of the U.S.A., while the annual rate of expansion of Russia's industrial production is several times greater than that of her Western rivals.

A fourth aspect of Khrushchev's industrial policy has been a relaxation in one respect of the grip of the State on the worker. The factory hand is not protected by his Trade Union; he may not strike and he cannot effectively argue about the conditions of his employment; under the new dispensation, however, he may leave his job and wander about the country looking for fresh employment. He will, it is true, lose some privileges, such as holidays and health insurance, but at least he has this small measure of freedom for the first time for many years.

Altogether the results of Khrushchev's industrial policy are impressive, but the ordinary man is perhaps more conscious of appalling roads, the very high price of nearly all commodities, the absence of anything to lend colour to life, and the very serious lack of house accommodation. It is reliably reported that in Moscow people often live three, four or five to a room, that few families have kitchens or bathrooms of their own and that cupboards are almost unknown. Gunther describes crowds marching up and down the boulevards at night, even in winter, because 'houses are so unbelievably crowded, squalid and uncomfortable'. Things are better than they were under Stalin, but they are still grim by standards elsewhere in Europe.

ART AND LITERATURE

Amongst the mild concessions to freedom which occurred in the early years of Khrushchev's reign, perhaps the most notable was that in the realm of literature and art. The last seven or eight years of the Stalin era had indeed been intellectually and spiritually barren. It had been the accepted thesis that art in all its forms only existed to subserve the Communist State. Time and energy must not be wasted on romances or works of imagination unless they could assist the fulfilment of the Five Year Plan. Mechanics, heroes of the labour front, model cultivators and the like were the only fit subjects for books. 'Socialist realism' was the order of the day and as a Russian writer said, when 'de-Stalinization' had made it safe to say it, creative talent had been smothered and literature and art fit only for 'dead souls' had been produced.

Almost immediately after the arrest of Beria there were signs of the nearest approach to a romantic movement possible in Soviet Russia. Authors began to forget about the Revolution and to write about love and ordinary human interests for their own sake. Authority seemed to encourage this development and Malenkov even invited writers to expose the evils of contemporary Russian society. In 1954 some of them took the invitation seriously and had to be sharply reminded that they must not go outside the framework of Leninist thought. A well-known dramatist, Zorin, was still sufficiently wilful to describe how the Party had fallen off from the high ideals of its earlier days and the rap over the knuckles he received was so sharp as to make would-be imitators pause.

The official denigration of Stalin nevertheless gave a further impetus to freedom in writing, and provided a suitable whipping boy for those writers who wished to use their critical faculties. For a time there was a considerable degree of latitude, but Khrushchev took alarm at the time of the uprisings in Poland and Hungary. The tightening up which followed can be illustrated by two famous books, *Not by Bread Alone* by Vladmir Dudinstev, and the even better known *Dr. Zhivago*.

Not by Bread Alone appeared first in *Novy Mir*, the well-known literary review with almost an official position. Publication of this novel abroad occasioned so much alarm and despondency in Moscow that it was over a year before its issue in book form in Russia was permitted. To Western eyes the book seems harmless and not very interesting—but the villain of the piece is a Soviet bureaucrat of the worst type and the story is constructed round an elaborate network of intrigue in which local

Party members played principal parts. It was thought to be calculated to bring authority into disrepute and Khrushchev himself considered it necessary to attack the book. The writer was not punished, but many other writers took the hint. Some bold spirits, however, continued to offend, while others—unwilling to challenge authority, but not prepared to write except from their heart, simply ceased to write at all. To Khrushchev this attitude appeared much like what the traditional British Regimental Sergeant Major used to call 'dumb insolence' and in May 1957 he summoned a group of writers to Moscow for the express purpose of telling them that if they did not behave themselves he would have no compunction about shooting them.

The situation was now reasonably clear. An author had liberty within certain limits, but they were narrow and well defined. They can best be illustrated by the *cause célèbre* of *Dr. Zhivago* in September 1956. It will be remembered that the *Novy Mir* refused to publish this novel. A copy of the manuscript had, however, already been sent to an Italian publisher, and before long, in spite of bitter Russian protests, it appeared first in Italian and then in English. Pasternak was awarded the Nobel prize for literature, but was (virtually) compelled by the Soviet authorities to renounce it. The reasons for the condemnation of *Dr. Zhivago* were set forth at great length in *Novy Mir*'s letter of rejection and as that rejection was endorsed by the highest authority, they may be regarded as the official pronouncement of policy. The letter is too long for reproduction here.* The general complaint was stated to be that 'the spirit of your novel is that of non-acceptance of the socialist revolution'. This was amplified in both its positive and negative aspects. It was alleged that Dr. Zhivago was satisfied with pre-revolution Russia, that the revolution had not become a necessity for him, and that he did not realize the difference between the two revolutions of 1917. A more damning criticism was that Dr. Zhivago declared that he knew of no teaching more divorced from reality than Marxism and worse still that he had long considered that the revolution ought to have done something and it had not. Other charges related to the sympathetic portrayal of a man who, torn with conflicting emotions, helped a wounded enemy and to a belief in the importance of the individual. It was not just a question of disagreeing with the opinions put into the mouth of Dr. Zhivago. The important thing was that they should never have been uttered.

It is not necessary to pursue this matter further. Under Khrushchev writers and artists have not been executed for nonconformity, but they

* It will be found as an appendix to *Khrushchev's Russia*, by Edward Crankshaw.

have been ostracized or made to recant. Whether under Stalin or Khrushchev, fundamentally the approach is the same. There is no place in the Communist system for the man who will not submit his mind and heart to the dictates of authority.

EDUCATION AND SCIENCE

In spite of the lack of intellectual freedom there has been considerable progress in education. Illiteracy, which was not long ago characteristic of rural Russia, has been considerably reduced. Education is free and compulsory for ten years of a child's life, and university education is available for all who can pass the appropriate, rather stiff examination. School buildings are ultra-modern and throughout the Union their equipment would be the envy of teachers in many countries. An equal cause of envy would be the high salaries paid to teachers at all levels and the hard work expected of students. An American observer reports that the Russian child attends school six hours a day on six days a week, and that including homework, students of from fifteen to seventeen years of age are expected to do from ten to twelve hours' work a day.

The objects of education in Russia are, however, strictly utilitarian. At all stages, and for girls as well as boys, the emphasis is on science and technology. Even in the universities, the aim appears to be to produce specialists rather than men or women of general education. Many observers report that even the most advanced students are in general ignorant of world affairs or of matters outside their curriculum. The system turns out graduates who can contribute to the material progress of the state—anything beyond that is a luxury. Even in this limited field there is no reason to think that the West is outclassed in quality, but it is probably true that the resources available for the education of scientists or technologists or for scientific research are relatively greater in the U.S.S.R. than in any Western country.

THE STRUCTURE OF SOCIETY

A study of the structure of Russian society would take us far beyond the scope of this book. It is only necessary to note that there is nothing even remotely corresponding to the classless society of the Communist textbook. The great disparities of income which, as we have seen, prevailed in the Stalin era continue under Khrushchev and are not minimized as in the West by income tax. The State is financed from profits arising from

its ownership of land, transportation and industry and from State conducted retail trades. Income tax in the majority of cases is negligible by Western standards and even in the highest income brackets only rises to thirteen per cent. This does not mean that people escape lightly in respect of their dues to government. Indirect taxation is indeed, heavy. Prices in the government shops are fixed so high in relation to production costs that they could reasonably be regarded as profiteering, and it has been said by friendly observers that when there is scarcity, government imposes rationing by the purse. In some commodities a free market exists side by side with State trading and it is said that in such fields black-marketing is an open scandal.

Although the means of production are owned by the State, most other forms of private property continue. Private house-ownership is normal and is indeed encouraged by the State. Gunther gives an interesting description of what happens when an individual decides to build a house for himself. 'First the worker must prove that he has been a good worker, and has fulfilled his "plan". He will need recommendation from his trade union or factory manager. He then goes to a bank, where he may borrow up to fifteen to twenty thousand roubles for fifteen years, at three or even two per cent interest; he pays off the debt in small instalments, usually through deductions from his wages. Next, he goes to a local building agency and, if lucky, receives an allocation of land, materials, and labour. Next, he builds his house on the plot assigned, pays the construction company, and moves in. Subsequently he may sell, rent, or bequeath this property. He does not, however, own the land, which belongs to the state in perpetuity and absolutely.'

It all sounds very much like the procedure in a capitalist country, and when to this we add the fact that property is inherited much as in the West and that estate duty is very light, it becomes clear that what prevails in the U.S.S.R. is not socialism, but statism. The pattern of life is indeed far different from that envisaged by the founding fathers. Crankshaw goes so far as to say that it is doubtful if Marx-Leninism in the Soviet State 'means anything more than a general conviction that the State comes before the individual'.

This does not mean that Communism is dead. Far from it. The Marxist-Leninist theory has provided the dynamism with which Russia has converted herself from a backward country into the second greatest industrial power in the world. It has been truly said that Lenin shattered the old Russian society; that Stalin turned it into a going modern concern fit to stand up to the West; and that Khrushchev, utilizing the energy gener-

ated by a philosophy of revolution, is building a new Russia which is intended to be partly a strong fortress and partly an earthly paradise. The price paid for all these achievements is the loss of individual freedom. Few people in the West would think the price worth paying, and there have been signs of late that some sections of the Russian people are beginning to boggle at it.

VII

Russia and the World

IN THIS book we are only concerned with Russia's foreign policy in so far as it has been conditioned by Communism and we must not take it for granted that Russia's present aggressiveness is solely attributable to the Marxist-Leninist philosophy. It must be remembered firstly that expansionism is in the Russian tradition and secondly that throughout history successful revolutions, whatever their character, have in fact tended to generate the kind of national exuberance which seeks to express itself in conquest. Even if the inevitable revolution had been non-Communist, it is probable that Russia today would have been in an aggressive mood.

Communism, however, has given that aggression a special intensity and provided it with a new technique. According to Marx and Lenin, the world is divided into two irreconcilable camps, between whom conflict is inevitable, and right at the outset of the Bolshevik revolution, Lenin declared that 'as long as capitalism and Bolshevik socialism exist, we cannot live in peace of mind; in the end one or the other will triumph . . . a funeral dirge will be sung either over the Soviet Republic or over World Capitalism'. The revolution must be world wide. International frontiers existed for the benefit of the capitalists. It was the mission of Russia to destroy them and to unite the workers of the world in one universal revolution.

This was not to be brought about mainly by war, but by the uprising of the people in each country. The First World War was in fact to be converted into a civil war in all non-Communist countries. Bolshevik attempts to achieve this result in 1918 and 1919 were on the whole unsuccessful. Lenin and his colleagues misread the signs of the times in Germany, Hungary, Poland, Rumania and the Baltic States. There were many causes of discontent in those countries, but the appeal of Communism was not strong and only in Yugoslavia, where the formation of the new State was resented by important elements in the population, did the Bolshevik propaganda appear to have a chance of success.

Nevertheless, Lenin was still convinced that the world could be won for Communism within a short space of time by well-planned propaganda, and under his influence in March 1919 the Third International (or Comintern) was founded in Moscow. It was meant to take the place of the Second International, which might loosely be described as Socialist rather

than Communist, and which was regarded by Russian Communists almost as the enemy within the gates.

The objectives of the Comintern were soon defined as being to organize subversion in the capitalist countries through the agency of local Communist parties; to set one 'imperialist' country against another; and to exploit the demands for independence of the colonial peoples.

In spite of its somewhat grandiloquent manifesto to 'the proletarians of the whole world' the Third International was not, at the outset, what its name suggests. It was scarcely international at all, but consisted almost entirely of representatives of Russia and a few individuals who made their way to Moscow without any particular backing from their respective countries. By the following year, however, more support was forthcoming and the Communist parties of Central and East Europe were well represented at the Second Congress. They felt themselves strong enough, indeed, to lay down twenty-one conditions of membership which were to govern the Comintern throughout its life. The most important obligations accepted by members were—to oppose 'reformists' (since they weakened the Communist case); to form nuclei in Trade Unions; to undertake secret subversive propaganda in their respective countries and at the same time to form open parliamentary groups where this was possible; to enlist the support of peasants everywhere, as well as of colonial and oppressed peoples; and to submit to the control of the Central Committee and the Congress. Since Russia was obviously in a position to dominate the Congress, this constitution in effect gave her for the time being control of the world Communist movement.

At this period Russia had two reasons for wishing to intensify subversive activities in Europe. In the first place the Allied intervention had left behind not only a deep resentment, but also the fear that the Allies would soon seek another opportunity of crushing Bolshevism. The bourgeoisie of Western Europe, declared Trotsky, were mobilizing their resources for this purpose. It was desirable, therefore to embarrass and weaken the governments concerned in every possible way.

Secondly, by 1921, whatever revolutionary fervour had existed in Western Europe had fizzled out and even Trotsky had lost his former optimism. The Bolsheviks either had to abandon the idea of world revolution—which was unthinkable—or to find some means of imposing it on the world. Military force was out of the question, since Russia was conscious of her own weakness and even the limited attempts to force Communism on Poland had failed. The only possibility was the intensification of propaganda.

At the Third Congress of Comintern in 1921, Lenin and Trotsky therefore advocated the policy of the United Front. Communists were to join other workers organizations, to take the lead in the fight for better conditions and in the process to gain the ascendancy and gradually wean the masses away from their non-Communist Socialist leaders. This proposal profoundly shocked the more orthodox members of the Third International, but the influence of Lenin and Trotsky secured its adoption. It was not very successful at the time, but was to be revived with somewhat greater effect in the fourth decade of the century.

Russia's policy towards other countries now began to be characterized by a certain dualism, best illustrated by the case of Germany. Antagonism towards the Allies, together with a fear of complete isolation, induced the Russian government to move closer to Germany—a movement which led in 1922 to the treaty of Rapallo providing for friendly relations and preferential treatment. This did not prevent the Comintern, controlled as it was by Russia, from pursuing a policy of active subversion in Germany. At an Executive Committee of the Comintern in September 1923, plans for a widespread Communist revolution in Germany were made and under cover of the official friendly relations between the two countries, a number of important Comintern leaders and military experts were able to proceed to Germany to organize the rising. The plan was based on a completely wrong estimate of the strength of the Communist movement in Germany and it failed dismally.

A similar dualism characterized the relations of Russia with Britain at this time. In 1921, Litvinov who consistently advocated closer relations with the West, successfully negotiated a Trade treaty with Britain and thereby secured *de facto* recognition of the Soviet Union. *De jure* recognition followed in 1924, when Britain set an example which was soon followed by a number of countries. Neither of these developments was allowed to interrupt the steady flow of money for anti-British propaganda, first in Ireland and then in India, or the carrying on of revolutionary activities in England. The genuineness or otherwise of the Zinoviev letter, advising the British Communist party how to form revolutionary cells in the armed forces, is still a matter of dispute, but there is ample evidence to show that the General Strike in 1926 was partly financed from Russia. Even more damning was the evidence which became available in 1927, when the British authorities conducted a search of Arcos, the All-Russian Co-operative Society. It then became clear that the primary function of Arcos had been subversive propaganda and espionage.

Stalin's policy of Socialism in one country had not in any sense implied

an abandonment of the determination to force Communism on the rest of the world. It had merely meant that Russia could become a completely Socialist State herself, without waiting for the success of the world movement.

After the Arcos search diplomatic relations with Russia were broken off by Britain and the Trade Agreement was abrogated. The Communists had in fact over-reached themselves. The initially favourable British Trade Union reaction towards Profintern—the Communist international Trade Union subsidiary of Comintern—rapidly changed and the Communists forfeited the sympathy of the British Labour Party. Not till 1929 were relations between Britain and Russia resumed. That resumption then took place, partly because both countries felt the need to trade with one another and partly on the strength of a promise by the moderate Deputy Foreign Commissar, Litvinov, that there would be no further interference in British domestic affairs.

The next few years witnessed a long series of unsuccessful attempts by the Communists to stir up revolution in Poland, Austria, Italy, Hungary and Rumania, while the failure of the Communists to understand the discontent in Germany and their unwisdom in lining up for a while with the Nazis against the Socialists played right into Hitler's hands.

A little later, alarmed at the apparent shift in Hitler's policy implied in the German-Polish Pact of 1934, Russia moved somewhat away from Germany and sought better relations with the Allied powers. She entered the League of Nations, made mutual assistance pacts with France and Czechoslovakia and welcomed the British Foreign Minister to Moscow. Even the U.S.A., which had so far held aloof from Russia, recognized the Soviet Union and in return the Bolsheviks undertook not to carry on propaganda in the U.S.A. None of these developments were allowed to hamper the subversive operations of the Communists and whenever protests against these activities were lodged, the Soviet leaders always professed to have no responsibility for the Comintern.

It was nevertheless clear that Communism was making very little headway in Europe and at the Seventh Congress of the Comintern in 1935, it was decided to adopt the new tactics of the Popular Front. In the previous decade the policy of the United Front had involved alliances with and entry into other working-class organizations, but the new concept was much wider. The Communists were now, in defiance of all generally accepted Communist principles,* to ally themselves where necessary even with the bourgeoisie and with every party ready to fight the

* Another exception was made in China, as we shall see in a later chapter.

Fascists. This move has been described by a leading authority as the most successful tactic ever adopted by the Comintern in peace time; but, in fact, its success in Europe was very limited and temporary. The vast Stalinist purges in Russia at this time profoundly shocked even the Communists in other countries, and made the task of infiltration difficult.

In France the exploitation of local difficulties and grievances led to the formation of a Popular Front Government, with the Socialist, Blum, as Premier, but for reasons which cannot be discussed here the movement soon fizzled out. In Spain the Popular Front met with very little success in the Civil War and it was partly for this reason that Stalin found himself somewhat reluctantly forced to undertake direct intervention. Only in Yugoslavia did the tactics of infiltration yield good results at this time. On the whole, in spite of its early promise, the policy of the Popular Front was a failure and just before the Second World War Communism was not in a strong position in Europe outside Russia.

The Russian alliance with Hitler, shameful though it appeared to Western eyes, was in accord with the Communist theory that the end justifies the means and made it possible for Russia to fulfil her long-cherished ambition of invading Poland. The entry of Russia into the Second World War provided the Communists with a unique opportunity. They were now able to operate openly in some countries where their activities had been rigorously controlled. More important still, at a very early stage they participated in the National Resistance Movement in enemy-occupied countries, with the twofold aim of assisting the War effort and building up their own position for the future. It was indeed the confidence so created that enabled them at the end of the War to secure control of a number of East European countries and it appears that only the military intervention of the British deprived them of a similar success in Greece. In Poland on the other hand the resistance movement remained almost entirely in non-Communist hands, and Communism only became a serious force when Russia established the mainly Communist so-called Committee of National Liberation.

The necessity of co-operating with the Allies naturally imposed some restraint on direct Communist propaganda during the War. Russia could scarcely continue openly to proclaim world revolution as her aim and it was for this reason that, in 1943, the Comintern, which was intensely disliked by the Allies, was dissolved. The interruption was temporary and purely tactical. It deceived many people at the time, but in reality Stalin had never abandoned the belief that the world was irreconcilably divided between the capitalist and the Communist countries. According

to Marxist doctrine the ultimate victory of the Communists was inevitable, but it could and must be hastened by defeating and undermining the position of the capitalist governments.

The resumption of the fight against capitalism nevertheless required caution. Not all European countries offered equally hopeful targets. There were countries, such as Yugoslavia and Rumania, where it was reasonable to expect the establishment of a Communist government at an early date; but there were other countries where at the most, the Bolsheviks could only hope to lay the foundation for a distant Communist future and in the meanwhile to embarrass the governments concerned. The vulnerable countries, which soon became satellites, will be discussed in a later chapter. At the moment we must consider areas which were not potentially Communist.

In 1945–46 the operations of the Communists in these territories were in the main open and constitutional. They supported the legitimate complaints of labour, or they sought to establish a strong position in the legislatures. In this phase the Communists met with very limited success.

By 1947, Russia had moved away from her former Western allies and had no inhibitions about embarrassing them openly. The Communists, moreover, had come to have little faith in the possibility of converting the Socialists in Europe into camp followers. A new aggressiveness now appeared in their operations. Carew Hunt suggests that three factors may have contributed to the change. First the desire to counter the Marshall Plan; secondly, the fact that every totalitarian régime needs an external enemy; and thirdly the need to re-establish Communist orthodoxy in Russia, after the relaxation in it brought about by war conditions and by the contact of Russian soldiers with the outside world. A further factor may have been the apparent failure of gradualness.

In September 1947, Zdhanov, about to become the prophet of the 'Cold War', inaugurated the Cominform which was in fact the reorganization of the Comintern in its propaganda aspects. The theory of the two hostile camps was proclaimed again and the Western nations were branded as aggressors. The chief task of the Communists, according to Zdhanov, was to lead the resistance to the American plan for the enthralment of Europe, and Communists everywhere were called on to fight strenuously for peace. This pretence that the Communists stand for peace has been the key of Cominform propaganda since 1947 and to strengthen the illusion the sponsors of the new Cominform journal gave it the seductive title of 'For a Lasting Peace'.

The Bolshevik record, however, was such that only the very simple

minded could be misled by a direct approach of this kind and resort was had to the stratagem of creating a number of new international bodies, controlled and financed from Moscow, but apparently independent and idealistic in their aims. The most important of them were the World Peace Council, the World Federation of Trade Unions and the World Federation of Democratic Youth. They will be discussed in detail in a later chapter.

An examination of the continual changes and contradictions in Soviet foreign policy during the last decade would be more appropriate in a history of power politics than in a study of Communism. We are only concerned to note that the present attitude of the U.S.S.R. to the world is a natural, historical development from the revolution of October 1917. The recent fluctuations of Russian policy between bellicosity and talk of peaceful co-existence must not make us forget that militancy was inherent in Russian Communism. When the hopelessness of rapidly bringing about a world revolution by force became apparent, the U.S.S.R. relapsed into a malevolent isolationism. 'Socialism in one country' could only be achieved if that country was shut off from contact with the outside world, and the Iron Curtain was erected not only to exclude contaminating influences, but also to prevent the Russian people from discovering that life under the capitalist system was far different from that which they were taught to believe. This isolationism was purely tactical and the aim of making the world Communist, either by force of arms or by fomenting revolution, was never abandoned.

Since that time three changes have taken place. In the first place the 'Thaw' had a double effect. It enabled the Russian people to make clear their desire for peace and the apprehensions which they had felt regarding the truculent international policy of Stalin, while at the same time, it made it very important for government to direct some of the national resources from defence to the production of consumer goods. The improvement of the standard of living had become a condition of survival for the Soviet Government, and war could make that condition impossible of fulfilment. Truculence in external relations must, therefore, not be carried too far.

Secondly, Russia's industrial production had increased more rapidly than even her rulers can have expected. In fifteen or twenty years' time, even though her general economic level may be below that of the U.S.A., it is now more than possible that in respect of those industries on which military might depends, she will be the most powerful country in the

world. Her prospects of success in war would then be far greater than they are now. Moreover, even apart from the possibility of war, her economic system will then have a more powerful pull on the uncommitted countries than it has so far exerted. India, for example, is watching anxiously to see if she can by democratic means progress as fast as Russia and China. If this proves impossible, the temptation to turn to Communism might be great. In a military struggle with the Western powers today, Russia would almost certainly lose. A war in a generation's time may either be a good bet or may be unnecessary for the triumph of Communism. The U.S.S.R. therefore has everything to gain by buying time.

Thirdly, there is no longer any question of 'socialism in one country'. In his brilliant study *The Great Contest*, Deutscher has shown how, since the Second World War, the U.S.S.R. has built for herself a Communist empire in East Europe, and how that empire is gradually being converted into something like an international economic union. The U.S.S.R. is no longer able to exploit it ruthlessly as a colonial territory and the terms of trade are becoming increasingly favourable to Russia's East European allies. Inside this bloc there are no tariff barriers and the national plans of the constituent countries are co-ordinated by a Committee for Economic Mutual Assistance. The healthy growth of this new socialist commonwealth demands a long period of peace and a relief from the burden of armament.

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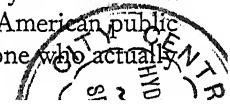
For all these reasons the U.S.S.R. has everything to gain from a decade or so of 'peaceful coexistence', during which the international *status quo* would be preserved. Such a period will, in the Soviet view, greatly facilitate the spread of Communism. This does not mean that the long term aim—Communist domination of the world—has been abandoned, but rather that a fairly long period of preparation is required. In January 1961, soon after the meeting of the Communist Parties of the World in Moscow, Khruschev made a speech which left no room for doubt on this point. Peaceful coexistence, declared Khrushchev, provides the most favourable conditions for the struggle against 'imperialism' and the equally important class struggle in capitalist countries. 'There is only one way of bringing imperialism to heel—the unflagging consolidation of the economic political and military might of the socialist states.' It is, of course, plain common sense that in a long period of preparation for the ultimate struggle, the spirit of antagonism to the Western powers must be kept alive in Russia and every possible opportunity must be taken to confuse and humiliate them. It has been said that the American public likes a President who takes the risk of war, but dislikes one who actually



embarks on that operation. Khruschchev does not have to worry about popular opinion quite as much as does the President of the United States, but all recent indications are that, while not wanting a war, he will run considerable risk of its outbreak in order to score political and psychological success. Only a very rash man would guess how far this policy of 'brinkmanship' can be pushed without loss of control. Its relevance to our subject is that it is the logical outcome of the historical forces unleashed by the Bolshevik Revolution.

VIII

The East European Satellites

THE SUBJECT of Communism in East Europe clearly requires a whole book in itself. As it has to be compressed into one chapter of a small book, we must be highly selective. We shall attempt first to describe the rise of Communist power in the four countries of the Lower Danube; then to discuss the somewhat different circumstances of its growth in Yugoslavia and Poland, and finally to summarize the recent attempts in Hungary and Poland to regain freedom.

The Communist seizure of power followed certain generally similar lines in Hungary, Rumania, Bulgaria and Czechoslovakia and was a logical sequence to the destruction of German power and the complete dominion of that region by Russia. Before the Second World War, the Communist parties in this area, though active, were small and unimportant, but during the War they gained in experience and popularity by their leadership of the resistance movements. Towards the end of the War, operations against the Nazis brought powerful Russian forces into these countries and before long the U.S.S.R. exercised almost complete control over the entire region. By this time the local Communist parties were sufficiently well organized to profit from the backing of the U.S.S.R. The Soviet leaders, however, who exploited to the full the failure of the democratic parties to carry out long overdue social and economic reforms, were in no hurry. They played their cards with great skill, and their operations fell into three phases, which have been brilliantly described by Gordon Shepherd*.

In the first place control was exercised behind the scenes by an Inner Communist Party ring, which was content to leave the main governmental posts in the hands of non-Communists. Since Russia held the whip hand, the gamble was a safe one.

In the second phase, coalitions were formed and Russian authority was used to ensure that the key posts, which guaranteed the control of the Services, were in Communist hands.

In the third phase, all the principal functions of the State and the Party alike were shared by a small group of local Communists who could be relied on for their subservience to Russia. Long before this time, Communism as practised in Moscow had become identified with Russian

* *Russia's Danubian Empire.*

Imperialism, and those Communists who were true nationalists and might be expected to dislike the Russian yoke, were soon liquidated.

HUNGARY

Hungary and Czechoslovakia provide excellent illustrations of the application of these principles. Hungary had her first experience of Communism in 1919, when Bela Kun, a Hungarian revolutionary trained in Russia, made use of Hungarian anger at her imminent loss of considerable territory to establish a short-lived Soviet revolution in Hungary. He met with no public support and after his expulsion Hungary settled down for a decade under a Conservative government which made no serious effort at removing social and economic injustices. In spite of the irredentist obsessions of the Hungarian people and the help given her by the Axis in that connection, her co-operation with Germany in the Second World War was perfunctory and when Hungary sought to make peace with the Allies in 1944, Hitler invaded the country and established a puppet government. This was soon overthrown by the Russian forces and a provisional government under Mikloss was established in the north-east. After the termination of hostilities an Allied Occupation Control was set up, but in practice all authority within it was exercised by the U.S.S.R. Russia in fact moved into a power vacuum.

The Provisional Government was a coalition of five parties of which the most important were the Smallholders and the Communists—the latter having developed effectively from the Communist Resistance Movement inaugurated in 1941. The Communists were in fact the only well organized group, though the Smallholders considerably outnumbered them. The elections in 1945, which were reasonably free, worked out badly for the Communists, who only secured seventeen per cent of the votes cast. Russian influence was nevertheless strong enough to force the Smallholders to accept a Communist Minister of the Interior. Imre Nagy held this post at first, but according to Seton Watson, he was not tough enough and was soon replaced by Lazlo Rajk. The Minister used his control of the security forces to make it practically impossible for the Smallholders to continue as a separate party, while trumped up conspiracy charges and other well-known Communist methods were used to compel the Democrats to merge with the Communists under the Party boss, Rakosi. In 1949 it was thus possible to hold the elections on the basis of a single list. That is to say, the electors could vote for or against candidates on the Government list, but not for any alternatives. Naturally the

Communists won a complete victory. The Constitution drafted after the election closely followed the Soviet pattern and was declared to be 'based on the organization of the class-conscious worker'.

In 1953, the single list procedure was repeated, all lists of candidates being approved or amended, first by county electoral committees and then by the national electoral committee. When in 1954 the Patriotic People's Front of all the Communist Groups was established, all other parties ceased to exist. The normal Communist apparatus of a Politburo and the like was established, and from this time onwards the Communist party frankly ran the country. Non-party members were allowed and indeed pressed to join mass organizations, such as the Communist Youth Organization and the Federation of Democratic Women, but it was stated quite bluntly in a Communist Youth Meeting that 'we cannot allow alien and hostile ideologies to gain influence'.

In the next four years, Hungary was brought under a ruthless totalitarian rule. Many thousands of non-Communists were arrested on political charges and even the party leadership was so thoroughly purged as to make the entire party completely subservient to Rakosi. Collectivization of agriculture was forced with great brutality on one-third of the peasants of Hungary, while the urban workers suffered from the imposition of ever increasing norms of production. Large numbers of men, women and children were deported to labour camps, their houses being taken over for the convenience of the Police and other 'loyal' officials.

In Hungary as elsewhere the changes consequent on Stalin's death led to some relaxation of Communist tyranny, and Imre Nagy, who had kept out of the limelight since 1947, was appointed by the Soviet leaders as Prime Minister instead of Rakosi. Nagy's 'New Course' involved a number of liberal changes. Peasants were permitted to leave the collective farms. Many deported peasants were brought back home, and some degree of tolerance was shown to religion.

This less unhappy interlude did not last long. Rakosi managed to undermine Nagy's position and in 1955 again became Prime Minister, after having secured Nagy's expulsion from the Party. Rakosi partially countermanded Nagy's measures of liberalization, but never again acquired quite the unlimited power he had possessed before 1953.

CZECHOSLOVAKIA

In Czechoslovakia circumstances were somewhat different, inasmuch as almost from the time of her creation that country, under the guidance of

Dr. Benes, had leaned heavily on Russia as a protector against Germany —and it was indeed natural that the people of Czechoslovakia should be pre-disposed in favour of a Slav State. During the Second World War a number of important posts in the exiled London Government of Czechoslovakia were given to leading Communists. When the Government was re-established in Prague, Benes's obsession with the belief that Russia would not interfere with the affairs of the country was confirmed by the general feeling that the Russians 'had delivered them from the Nazi hell'. The assistance given to the Government by the U.S.S.R. in the suppression of the Prague rebellion in 1945, and the complete withdrawal of Russian troops from the country shortly thereafter, all helped to allay suspicion. In the Provisional Government, such important posts as those of Minister of the Interior and Minister of Information were given to Communists, while on Russian insistence, Fierlinger, a Democratic party fellow-traveller, was made the head of the Government.

Nevertheless, contemporary observers report that by 1947 Communist influence amongst the public was declining. The Communist Press therefore began a bitter campaign against reactionaries, and allegations that non-Communists were conspiring with foreign imperialists against their country were frequently made. Before long, Mosek, the Communist Minister of the Interior, had virtually converted the Police into a Communist army and for this purpose had dismissed or transferred to unimportant posts a number of senior non-Communist officers. The Government, in which there was still a non-Communist majority, ordered him to reinstate eight of these officers and on his refusal twelve non-Communist Ministers offered their resignation.

By a curious coincidence, Zorin, the Russian representative dealing with the affairs of Czechoslovakia, had just arrived in Prague. The Communists at once established Action Committees—the personnel of which had been carefully prepared in advance—in every region, factory, office or communal organization. Non-Communist members of the organizations were expelled and within a few days the Press was so completely in Communist hands, that no protest against the action Committees could be published. The Police gave full support to these Committees and crowds began to parade the streets, shouting their support of the Communist Premier, Gottwald, who had by now been put at the head of government as a result of Russian pressure.

On February 22, 1948, a well-packed Workers' Congress declared its loyalty to Gottwald, while the Press published an article from *Isvestia*, in which Russia assured the Czech Communists of its complete support.

The headquarters of other parties were raided; the expected meeting of Parliament was cancelled, and the President, Benes, was not allowed to broadcast. Benes, who had for some time been a sick man, remained strangely inactive, hoping for the best, and, ultimately, under strong pressure, he accepted the resignation of the protesting Ministers and submitted to complete Communist domination. His own record of his talk with Premier Gottwald just before his resignation, is one of the most pathetic documents in modern history.

It is not easy to reconcile the evidence referred to above, to the effect that Communist influence amongst the masses had fallen off considerably, with the absence of opposition of any kind to this remarkable Communist *putsch*. It is indeed such a striking illustration of what can be done by a resolute minority, that it seems worthwhile quoting what was written on the subject by a contemporary Czech observer, Otto Friedman. 'The Communists, however, do not seek to gain an unlimited number of adherents or even the numerical majority of the working class; they concentrate rather upon the intensive training of a smaller number of devoted comrades who occupy, or are directed to take up, key positions in Government departments, factory councils, voluntary economic and cultural organizations. They have brought to perfection a technique which enables them to conquer a large organization by a very small number of their comrades.

'Suppose, for instance, they want to obtain control over a local Trade Union group consisting of two hundred members. Most of these members do not attend the meetings, or if they do so, then only irregularly: perhaps ten members are regular attendants. If of these three are Communists, and as such know each other while nobody else suspects that they are Communists and are systematically plotting together, all three will, after some time, contrive to be elected to the Committee of the group. They will impress the members by their readiness to take on the most dreary tasks and by their devotion to the trade union organization. When the local group is asked to send a delegate to the national congress of their organization, two of them will commend to the group their third comrade as delegate. As he has gained the confidence of the other ten members and is so strongly recommended, he is the most likely to be elected. In this way, three Communists are able to represent a group of two hundred trade union members. If, in the same manner, the Communists have succeeded in having their man elected in fifty local groups, they will have fifty delegates at a conference attended by five hundred delegates, representing one hundred thousand members. Whilst most of the delegates do

not know each other, the fifty Communists will have received detailed instructions from their Party, and will hold a special secret meeting before the conference. Eight of them will make popular speeches, and their comrades will loudly cheer them, thus inducing many other delegates to join in the applause. When the time comes to elect the Council, two of the eight popular Communist speakers will commend the election of six Communists, and their suggestions will again be loudly cheered. They may thus succeed in occupying six seats on a Council of eleven or twelve members. With one hundred and fifty men they have conquered a trade union organization comprising one hundred thousand members.

'Once in control of the organization, they will become more political, although not necessarily disclosing that they are Communists. They may actually be members of the Socialist, or any other, Party, and emphasize their allegiance to it whenever this serves their purpose. They will take exception to one or two political measures of the Socialist Party or perhaps to one or two of its leading politicians. Thus they will be indistinguishable from sincere members of the Socialist Party who happen not to agree with this or that. At the same time, they will take care that truly able democratic trade unionists—their most dangerous opponents—have only a limited influence upon the organization, or if possible, are completely eliminated from the organization. Gradually they will become more daring and disclose in stages their political convictions. They will misuse trade union publications for disguised Communist propaganda. When addressing Trade union meetings, they will sow distrust and dissatisfaction with the democratic order of the country. At the same time, they will systematically prepare for the day when the Party gives them the call to revolutionary action.'

RUMANIA

Rumania provides the third illustration of the technique by which the Communists gained power in the Balkans. During the period of the Hitler-Stalin Pact, Bessarabia had been forcibly taken from Rumania by the U.S.S.R. and the resulting sense of national disgrace led to the abdication of King Carol. The government which succeeded him was a curious mixture of the old ruling classes with revolutionary elements. The latter, however, were soon suppressed and General Antonescu headed an extremely Conservative Government which steadily refused to have anything to do with social or economic reforms. In the hope of recovering Bessarabia, Rumania allied herself with Germany towards the end of

1940. By 1943, some of the Rumanian objectives had been reached and her people were thoroughly tired of the War. The Rumanian Communists—a small and unimportant party—attempted to form a resistance movement in collaboration with the National Peasant Party, but the bid came to nothing, since the Communists felt bound to support the return to Russia of the 'liberated' province of Bessarabia, while the National Peasants were determined to retain it. The Communists went ahead with their movement independently and secured the help of a left-wing Peasant group known as the Ploughmen's Front, the most important figure in which was Dr. Groza.

In August 1944, King Michael dismissed Antonescu, announced the end of the War with the Allies, and appointed a Coalition Government which included one Communist Member. Rumania then declared war on Germany and Russian and Rumanian troops were soon fighting side by side. The advance of the Red Army into Rumania nevertheless created such alarm and despondency that in the Northern area many officials and landowners fled. The Russians had to assume responsibility for law and order in those regions and naturally appointed men who could be trusted to collaborate with the Communists. Even in the areas where administration had not been dislocated, the old officials were so generally corrupt and unpopular that little resistance was offered to their replacement by Soviet nominees.

At the same time the Ploughmen's Front which had originally been a radical reformist, but non-Communist, group fell rapidly under Communist influence and became indeed a branch of the Communist Party.

Tension between the Government and the Communists grew rapidly and led in February, 1945, to bitter fighting between the Communists and the National Peasant Party. The U.S.S.R. then intervened and compelled King Michael to appoint a Government of the National Democratic Front. This Front was in fact under Communist control and key posts in the Cabinet, including that of Minister of the Interior, were given to Communists, while the 'reliable' Dr. Groza was made Prime Minister.

The elections of November, 1946, were based on carefully screened electoral rolls and the National Democratic Front secured a large majority, on the strength of which it banned the National Peasant Party and forced the Social Democratic Party to amalgamate with the Communists in a party known as the United Workers Party. Dissident groups were dissolved or forced out of action and by the beginning of 1948 King Michael was compelled to abdicate. Communist control was now complete and a constitution similar to that of the U.S.S.R. was enacted.

BULGARIA

It is not necessary for our purpose here to follow in detail the corresponding proceedings in Bulgaria. Russian power, together with the deserved unpopularity of the old régime, made it possible for the Soviet representatives to put a Communist into the key post of Minister of the Interior and after a brief revolution in September 1944, a mainly Communist Fatherland Front was formed. Under its aegis elections were held in November 1945 in an atmosphere of terror and only supporters of the Fatherland Front were returned. Still more satisfactory results were obtained in the following year, when seven out of twenty-two members of the governing body of the chief opposition—known as the Agrarian Union—were in jail, while thirty-five out of eighty members of the General Council of that body were also under lock and key.

As long as the national hero George Dimitrov was at the head of government, there was some restraint on Communist oppression, but the usual methods—framed conspiracy charges, arbitrary arrests and the like—were increasingly applied after Dimitrov's death. These measures were gradually stepped up until all opposition was crushed and by 1949 Bulgaria was firmly under single party Communist rule.

RELIGION IN THE COUNTRIES OF THE LOWER DANUBE

We must now glance briefly at the effect on the life of the people in the Danubian countries and for this purpose we shall consider the position of religion, the peasants, the urban workers and the intellectuals. The attitude of Karl Marx to religion contains two elements. First the Church must be kept separate from the State and secondly people must be educated away from religion, which is merely 'the opiate of the masses'. Such an opiate was only required because poverty and its resulting misery compelled men to seek comfort in an illusion. Since the Bolsheviks persuaded themselves that they were about to put an end to poverty, the opiate would no longer be needed and religion must therefore be destroyed. The League of Militant Atheists set itself to achieve this end in Russia and in 1933 it proposed a five-year plan for the purpose. The plan completely failed and large numbers of the Russian people clung firmly to their old faith. Stalin therefore switched his policy over from abolition to regimentation. The Orthodox Church was made practically into a

State Department, controlled by the Soviet Council of Orthodox Affairs, which ran its own theological training colleges and helped to supply prayer books and works of devotion.

Profiting by Russian experience, the governments of the satellite countries at once set about regimenting the Orthodox Church. In Bulgaria and Rumania, where the great majority of the people belonged to that Church, the laws of religion enacted in 1948 and 1949 gave the Government complete control over every aspect of Church life. Ministers could be removed by the civil authorities, addresses in churches must conform to official regulations and State authorities might not even be mentioned in churches except in accordance with formulae laid down by the Government.

The Roman Catholic Church, to which the majority of people in Hungary and Czechoslovakia belong, presented a more difficult problem, since its allegiance to Rome rendered it less amenable to national control. In Hungary, Cardinal Mindszenthy's 'legitimacy' and his obstinate resistance to the secularization of schools gave the Government some justification for regarding him as an enemy of the Communist State and strengthened its determination to put an end to religious freedom. When the schools were first taken over by the State, religious teaching was continued and Catholic students were allowed to attend morning prayers. After the new Constitution came into force in 1949, prayers were abolished and religious instruction became optional, while according to Gordon Shepherd 'the greeting *Laudate Jesum Christum* by which Catholic pupils addressed their religious teachers was also dropped'. Contrary to official expectations, ninety per cent of pupils still attended the optional religious instruction and the Communists therefore began to harass the parents of those attending. Their names were black-listed in Communist journals, they were interviewed by local officials and in many ways made to feel that their behaviour was anti-social and unpatriotic. Few people can resist this kind of relentless pressure indefinitely and before long the Bible classes in schools practically came to an end.

This, however, was not sufficient to satisfy the Communists. Gordon Shepherd, an eye-witness of these transactions, gives a revealing account of the technique next employed.

> 'In the local parishes, police pressure and officially sponsored rowdyism have been exerted against all priests who, from their pulpits, still showed signs of fight, as well as against the individual parishioners who supported them. The chicaneries here were endless. They ranged

from simple acts of irritation whereby, for example, youths of the "Freedom Fighters' Association" would drown church services with the noise of their motor-bikes parked in the entrance, to a constant cold feud by the local Communist Party Committee. All administrative facilities, including transport would be refused for Church festivals, and the holding of even simple village ceremonies was made subject to the approval of the local police chief. The festivals themselves were forcibly adapted to suit factory hours—the Corpus Christi and Assumption Day processions, which fell on working days, for instance, were transferred to the following Sunday; and, on all state holidays, it was decreed that the last church ceremony must be completed by 8 a.m., to leave the day free for party demonstrations. Rival "peace meetings" were organized wherever possible on Church holidays in the attempt to distract attention from the religious church celebrations; and there is even evidence that, over the Whitsun period, the Hungarian "Kozert" state grocery stores have withheld issues of yeast, so that the population could not bake its traditional Whitsun cake.'

At the same time the monasteries were abolished and an entirely bogus Catholic Peace Movement was organized by the appropriate government department, with the aid of an excommunicated priest. The Bishops were deprived of practically all authority in their dioceses. Hundreds of the clergy were arrested for no other crime than that of loyalty to their faith.

In Czechoslovakia the same end was pursued by the Communists, but the methods used were on the whole less violent. It is nevertheless estimated that in 1953 eight hundred clergy and nuns were in jail or undergoing forced labour in that country. The Communists then made use of the insidious method of organizing a schismatic Catholic Movement, described as being wholly national in its character. Some English readers of this book may at first be attracted by the idea of a national Catholic Church out of communion with Rome, but they will agree that the Reformation in England would have been a poor thing if it had been sponsored by militant atheists. The behaviour of Archbishop Beran—one of the heroes of our time—under the Communist onslaught, was a model for churchmen everywhere. He loyally supported the Government in all secular matters, and kept himself well clear of politics, but he resolutely resisted this new mockery of religion and begged his co-religionists not to sell themselves for the silver of Judas. The pressure was, however, relentless. Government administrators were put into every Catholic Diocese, Government colleges were founded to train priests for the new

schismatic Church and an excommunicated priest who made himself the focal point of the schism was authorized by the Government to read Mass again. Large numbers of Czechs succumbed to the pressure, but the Catholic Church was not crushed and above all the Communist pretence of believing in freedom of religion was exposed to the world as a hollow mockery.

THE PEASANTS

The condition of the peasants may be illustrated by the situation in Hungary. Land reform was long overdue and the Communist land reform in 1945, which abolished holdings over a certain size and redistributed surplus land between about 600,000 families, was justly popular. The Communists, however, soon found themselves in difficulties. The *kulaks* or rich farmers against whom the régime waged war were often very popular. The gulf between them and the poor peasants was not so wide as in pre-revolutionary Russia and they were often elected to the local co-operatives. The poor peasants, on the other hand, were delighted to become landowners and became so attached to their land as to lose all sympathy with Communist ideas. Here as in the other Danubian countries, the peasants were assured that there would be no question of forcing them into collectives or depriving them of their newly acquired rights in land. The assurances meant nothing. Within four years, fifteen per cent of cultivators had been driven to join co-operatives and by 1953 the proportion had risen to thirty-five per cent. As at the corresponding stage in the U.S.S.R., there were several types of co-operative organization. In the lowest form there was merely co-operation for certain of the processes of cultivation, but in the 'highest' form individual ownership ceased and the community became the sole proprietor. Once the establishment of co-operatives was well under way, every possible form of economic compulsion was used to force the cultivators into the higher types of collective. The simplest and most effective of all methods related to the compulsory delivery of foodgrain to the State. The quota from the higher types of collectives was reduced, while that from the lower types was increased.

These collectives had, of course, their advantages. Tractor stations provided facilities which the cultivator would not otherwise have enjoyed, but they were also the nuclei where the members of the collectives were brought under a harsh discipline. They were extremely unpopular and very few cultivators joined them voluntarily.

It is not necessary to follow collectivization in the other Lower

Danubian countries. Ideologically the process had been a success, but experience all over the world shows how difficult it is to dragoon peasants, and collectivization has not helped the food supply in any of these countries. The cultivator has lost his freedom, but the town dweller has enjoyed no corresponding gain from increased production of food.

THE INDUSTRIAL WORKERS

It is difficult to write with accuracy of the effect of the Communist régime on the industrial worker. It is clear that the industrial economy of the countries we are now considering was until recently very firmly tied to the needs of the U.S.S.R. Whatever may be said about the economic policy described as 'colonialism' in the nineteenth century British Empire, no Government of India would have dared to subordinate the well-being of the country to Britain's advantage as was done by Russia in the satellite countries. The supply of equipment and raw materials was completely controlled in Moscow; currencies were regulated by the U.S.S.R.; and Russia, with profit to itself, became the supreme controller of markets.* The economy of each of these countries as a whole probably gained in the process. The growth of production and national wealth has been remarkable and it is unlikely that this would have taken place so rapidly if there had been no Communist revolution. What, however, of the individual worker?

When the Russian Revolution first took place, the management of the factories was to some extent in the hands of the Troika—a body consisting of the workers' factory committee, the Managers and the Communist Party representatives. This system was gradually stripped of its significance and was formally abandoned in 1937. When the Communists came to power in Czechoslovakia, workers in some areas had visions of sharing in management and the workers' Councils to some extent achieved this for a few months. In 1949 the Councils were deprived of this right and at the same time the system of the single list of candidates for election to the Council was established. The next step was the curbing of the power of the trade unions. In 1951 unions began to complain bitterly of unfair conditions and of the continual increases in piece-work tasks and in spite of Communist severity they threatened to organize strikes in support of their claims. This was clearly intolerable in a People's Republic. Many union leaders were arrested, the unions were completely reorganized under the firm control of the Minister for heavy industries, and they in

* Recently something more like the mutually beneficial Common Market has developed.

fact became the organ through which the State could compel increased production. The famous Russian Stakhanovite system was introduced and norms of work were constantly increased. Since this meant that the average worker was strained far beyond his capacity, most drastic laws were passed enabling the local officials to deal with absenteeism or failure to perform an adequate quantity of work—three months' imprisonment for example, could be inflicted for purposely failing to work. A little later, workers were forbidden to leave their jobs and every worker had to have his 'authorized work place' recorded in his identity card.

Events took a very similar course in Hungary. As soon as the Works Councils had been reduced to a nullity, piece-work was introduced wholesale, the task units were continually increased and the uncommunist doctrine of inequality was loudly proclaimed. Hungary soon found its own Stakhanov—a shockworker named Gazda—and the carrot and the stick were both utilized in forcing production up to the standard set by the labour heroes. Neither threats nor inducements would have worked if workers had been free to leave their jobs or stay at home. Persistent absenteeism was therefore made punishable with two years' imprisonment and workers were compelled to accept whatever jobs might be offered to them by the Labour Bureau. Every person was required to have a work book, which must be presented to the Bureau if he sought a new job, and if he had 'arbitrarily quitted' his last job, and had been lucky enough not to be sent to jail, he would be given a job at less pay than he formerly earned. If he were wicked enough to loaf, he could be sent to a labour camp. Failure to perform work properly, that is to the satisfaction of the manager, rendered the worker liable to be deprived of social security benefits, to lose his lunch-time intervals for a month, or, of course, to dismissal.

Nor can the workers in Hungary look to trade unions for protection, for as in Czechoslovakia, they have been reduced to departments of the State, concerned mainly with securing increased production. It has indeed been truly said in the Hungarian Trades Union Journal that 'especially in the matter of industrial production the Trades Union are to the Party and the masses what the transmission belt is to the machine'.

It is not possible here to analyse cost of living statistics and wages, but it is at least clear in the case of Czechoslovakia and Hungary, that though national wealth has increased, standards of living have gone down under the Communist régime. The worker today is worse off than his father, and into the bargain has lost the right to work where and at what job he likes.

THE INTELLIGENTSIA

It is not easy to describe the position of the intelligentsia in a few sentences. Those who have joined the Party and obtained work under the Government are doing very well. In Bulgaria for example, fairly soon after the Communists had established their authority, the head of a department of the Government was earning twenty times as much as an unskilled worker—to say nothing of the numerous perquisites enjoyed by a Bulgarian bureaucrat. In Czechoslovakia a good Party factory manager at the same period was earning anything up to fifteen times the wage of one of his employees, and in order to make life tolerable for him was also provided with a free house and a car. It can safely be said that good Party bureaucrats in all of the four countries have 'never had it so good'.

Even scholars and intellectuals can do well if they are either good Communists or at least bow down in the house of Rimmon. The ready pen is in constant demand by those who need to portray Communism to the outside world as the ideal system. For the nonconformist, things are altogether more difficult. We may illustrate this statement by reference to the position in Hungary, which has been well documented by Ferenc Körmendi in a collection of studies published by the Mid-European Studies Centre.

One of the most important literary bodies in Hungary before 1945 was the Writers' Federation, which was a kind of literary guild. After the Communists assumed power, it was converted into a State department under the control of the Division of Cultural Policy, and it advised that Division as to what should or should not be published. The new trend of censorship appeared as early as 1948 when two novels, written for the book festival held in celebration of the hundredth anniversary of the Hungarian War of Independence, were bitterly attacked in the official party organ on the ground that the authors were now living in non-Communist countries. A little later it became the fashion to take it for granted that Western literature must necessarily be decadent and a leading writer earned warm official approval by describing such literature as 'poisonous filth' which the reborn nations of Europe must reject with hatred. Semi-official advice was then given to writers—proletarian ideology must pervade their thinking; there must be a liquidation of all bourgeois cultural trends; socialist realism must be adopted and there must be complete adherence to progressive tradition; a good writer must be a

Marxist in the first place and must isolate himself from the sinister influences of Western civilization.

After Stalin's death there was some relaxation of this rigid attitude in all the Danubian countries, but in Hungary it was short lived, since severe repressions set in again after the attempted revolution of 1956, and a large number of writers and intellectuals were then expelled from the Communist Party. Whatever fluctuations in the degree of control may be tactically necessary, there is no place in the Communist society for true freedom of expression. The 'superstructure' must clearly take the foundations for granted.

YUGOSLAVIA

The pattern of Communist growth in Yugoslavia was quite different from that which we have observed in the four inland countries of the Lower Danube. Whereas in those countries Communism acquired strength mainly as a result of the dominance of Russia, in Yugoslavia the movement had been sufficiently important before the War to necessitate its being outlawed after attempts to assassinate the Prince Regent, Alexander. It had then developed rapidly as a result of the resistance to the Germans during the War. It owed little or nothing to direct Russian influence.

Yugoslavia is neither a geographical nor an ethnic unit. It consists of a number of different races, in the main inhabiting separate localities and artificially united in spite of the considerable antagonism between them. The most important of these people were the Serbs and the Croats who had for centuries distrusted and disliked each other. Before the outbreak of the Second World War both Germans and Italians had contemplated the dismemberment of Yugoslavia, but had perhaps been deterred by the strengthening of the country which resulted in 1938 from the grant of a measure of autonomy to Croatia and the inclusion of representatives of the radical Croat Peasant Party in the Central Government.

Early in 1941 the German need for bases in Southern Greece made Hitler anxious to secure either the alliance or at least the benevolent neutrality of Yugoslavia. Considerable pressure was therefore brought to bear on the Government of that country. The idea of a commitment to the Axis was extremely unpopular and the fear of it led, in 1941, to a *coup d'état* in which the Serbs took the leading part. The Germans promptly replied by attacking and overrunning Yugoslavia. Important areas of the country were parcelled out between Germany, Italy and Hungary, and

little remained beyond Croatia and Serbia proper. The Nazis favoured the Croats at the expense of the Serbs, and included several Serbian areas in the State of Croatia, where they established a puppet government under Pavelic. A little later a revolt in Serbia led to the setting up of a similar government in that State, with Nedic at its head.

Small units of the defeated Serbian army took to the mountains where they conducted a resistance movement, which, in addition to being anti-German was to some extent also anti-Croat. The Serbs had always had great affection for Russia and the invasion of that country by Germany gave added zeal to the resistance forces. At the same time the Communists, who had their own underground military organization, were able to exploit the pro-Russian feeling. Under the leadership of Joseph Broz, afterwards known as Tito, they adopted the name of Partisans and sought to co-operate with other Serbian nationalist groups, including the regular and irregular army units under Mihailovic, known as Chetniks. This alliance between the Communists and one who was regarded as a reactionary, could not last long, and in November 1941 fighting broke out between the Chetniks and the Partisans. This naturally played into the hands of the Germans who defeated both sets of resisters and executed several thousand Serbs, including children. The Partisans then took to the hills of Bosnia where they carried on guerrilla operations.

In the meantime, the initial popularity of the Germans in Croatia had waned. Under Pavelic the semi-Fascist state of Croatia had depended largely on a body known as the Ustash, originally an underground organization formed to wrest independence from Serbia and to overthrow King Alexander. Under Nazi influence the Government and the Ustash committed atrocities on such a scale as to disgust many of the older generations of patriots. The spirit of resistance to the Nazis grew rapidly, but the bitter anti-Croatian feeling of the Chetniks made it impossible for the Croats to join forces with Mihailovic. The Communists on the other hand, though mainly Serbs, had for some time advocated unity between the two peoples. Moreover, their general attitude appealed to the Croatian peasant organization which itself had a revolutionary background. When, therefore, in the middle of 1942 the Partisans began to appear in greater numbers in Croatia, many Croatian peasants joined them.

A tripartite struggle was now waged throughout the country between Partisans, Chetniks and Germans. Mihailovic and his followers disliked the Germans intensely but regarded the Partisans as the greater long-term danger, and even went so far as to co-operate actively with the hated Italians, who supplied Mihailovic with munitions and equipment. This

unnatural alliance created a good deal of resentment in Serbia and strengthened the popular appeal of the Partisans. The Communists thus came to dominate the national liberation committees which were formed first in the areas liberated by the Partisans, and then as underground movements in territories still occupied by the Germans.

In November 1942 representatives of the National Liberation Committee formed an Anti-Fascist Council of Liberation known as the A.V.N.O.J., which was in effect the government of the areas reconquered from the Germans. It pledged itself to a modest, non-revolutionary programme until the end of the War, but its leading spirits were mainly Communists.

The collaboration of Mihailovic—who had now become War Minister of the exiled Yugoslav Government—with the Italians, naturally led to attempts by the Allies to help the Partisans. This assistance, together with the possession of large quantities of arms and ammunition taken from some Italian Divisions which surrendered in September 1943, greatly strengthened the Partisans.

The Yugoslav Government in exile now resigned and King Peter appointed Puric as his Prime Minister. The A.N.V.O.J. however, felt strong enough to declare itself 'the supreme executive and legislative body of the Yugoslav State' and to appoint Tito, who had now been given the title of Marshal, as Premier. Puric was replaced by Subasic, a non-party man whose sympathies nevertheless lay with Tito and in December 1944 an agreement was made under which Tito was to be Premier and Subasic Foreign Minister. The King resigned his power to a Regency and the new government came into force in March 1945. By this time the Russian army had advanced into Yugoslavia and defeated the Nazis in several important battles. It is important to remember, however, that the Communist Partisans had established themselves as the effective rulers of much of Yugoslavia before the arrival of the Russians—a complete contrast to developments in the inland countries of the Lower Danube.

Tito now went ahead with the development of an unmistakably Communist State. Although the National Liberation Front—now renamed the People's Front—included other parties besides the Partisans, all important offices in it were held by Communists and the other parties were either not allowed or were not able to have their own separate organizations. Key posts in the Army and the Police were held by reliable Communists and an elaborate system of espionage was organized under a secret police on the U.S.S.R. model.

Non-Communists of any importance were soon forced out of the

People's Front, and if they were businessmen their concerns were nationalized without compensation. The elections of 1945 followed the normal Communist pattern. Large numbers of citizens were disfranchised, no opposition candidates were allowed to stand, and of course practically all seats were filled by Communist candidates. Tito then made it clear that the period for which he had promised to refrain from interfering with the social and economic structure was at an end and he embarked on the first steps towards collectivization of agriculture and other socialist policies. Criticisms of this development by non-Communist members of the Peoples' Front soon led to political trials and before long one-party government was firmly established.

At this stage dissensions began to arise between Tito and Stalin. Communists in Bulgaria and other neighbouring countries knew that they owed their position to Russia's military power and were content to do what they were told. The Yugoslav Party, on the other hand, resented the tutelage under which the U.S.S.R. sought to bring it. Russian advisers and missions were sent to Yugoslavia in large numbers and it soon became clear that they expected their advice to be taken. Conflict soon arose regarding agrarian reform and the respective positions of the urban workers and the peasants. The fact that the overwhelming majority of the Partisans were peasants made it quite impossible for Tito to assign to the industrial proletariat the principal *rôle* in the social structure as orthodox theory required. Nor was it practicable for him to force the pace of collectivization unduly against the will of the peasants, who were better off, more used to independence, and therefore more politically advanced than the *Muzhiks* in Russia. It is true that Yugoslavia moved faster in this matter than some of the Lower Danubian countries, but more could be forgiven to the subservient rulers of those lands than to the unruly, independent Tito.

To make matters worse, Yugoslavs openly criticized the behaviour and high salaries of the Soviet advisers, and expressed resentment at the obvious intention of the U.S.S.R., by means of its offer of military equipment and technical advice, to secure control of the Yugoslav army. A further issue soon became important. The U.S.S.R. made no secret of her desire to treat the East European Communist countries as an economic unit, in which the main function of the satellites would be merely complementary to that of Russia. Tito, however, was convinced that rapid industrialization was not only required by Marxist theory as a condition precedent to the full introduction of Socialism, but was also essential to the needs of his country. In 1947 he promulgated a five year plan for this

purpose. It is difficult to assess the accuracy of Tito's complaint that the U.S.S.R. set herself to make the plan unworkable and for this purpose deliberately put obstacles in the way of any exchange of goods between the two countries. It is, however, clear that Moscow disapproved of the Plan, and had in fact intended to keep Yugoslavia in the position of a 'colonial economy'.

The outside world was quite unaware of these stresses and strains until, on March 18th, 1948, the U.S.S.R. withdrew her military advisers because 'they were surrounded by hostility', and on the following day recalled her civilian advisers towards whom the Yugoslav Government was said to have shown 'lack of confidence and lack of hospitality'. This action was followed by a letter in which Tito was accused by the Cominform of Menshevism and other grave heresies, as well as of nationalism and failure to recognize the leading *rôle* of the U.S.S.R. Three months later, after a detailed and acrimonious correspondence, Yugoslavia was expelled from the Cominform on the grounds that 'by their anti-Soviet views . . . they have taken the path of seceding from the unified Socialist front against imperialism, have taken the path of betraying the cause of international solidarity of the working people, and have taken up a position of nationalism'. In other words you cannot be a good Communist unless you accept the supremacy of Russia—and this indeed was stated frankly in the Cominform Journal in December 1948—'The attitude towards the Soviet Union is now the test of devotion to the cause of proletariat internationalism'.

Tito was not dismayed. He had already declared that in Yugoslavia 'We study and take as an example the Soviet system, but we are developing Socialism in our country in a somewhat different form'. For about a year he continued what has been described as war by proxy, during which his lieutenants attacked the U.S.S.R. Communist Party, accusing them of 'bossy imperialism'—while keeping up the pretence of friendship with the U.S.S.R. itself. This position could not last, and by the end of 1949 enmity between the two countries was open.

Yugoslavia was now isolated. Trade between that country and the U.S.S.R. was reduced in 1949 to about one-eighth of its normal proportions, and thereafter practically ceased. At the same time the satellite countries were compelled to denounce their trade agreements with Yugoslavia and practically to discontinue economic relations. The Cominform's denunciation of Tito as a nationalist, together with the massing of Soviet and satellite forces on the borders of Yugoslavia, naturally strengthened his position in Yugoslavia itself, but it left him with the difficult

problem of carrying out his plans for industrialization without any economic assistance from outside. Inevitably he turned to the West for help and fortunately Western statesmen were wise enough to give the necessary aid without attaching 'strings' to it. Western countries re-opened trade with Yugoslavia, the World Bank and the Export-Import Bank gave loans, and considerable credits were made available to Yugoslavia by Britain and other countries.

It is not possible to follow this story further. It has been seen how Communism grew in Yugoslavia without Russian help; how Russia insisted that as a Communist country Yugoslavia must be under Comiform control; how Tito rejected that demand and maintained complete independence—even hostility—towards Russia while still pursuing a completely Communist policy at home; and how the West was wise enough to give substantial help to a Communist country which stayed outside the Russian imperialist camp.

POLAND

From the time of the successive partitions of Poland in the last quarter of the eighteenth century to the end of the First World War, that country had enjoyed practically no independent existence. When the Poles regained their freedom in 1918, they had equally bitter memories of their Russian and their German masters, but a strong anti-Communist bias, together with the War which they fought against Bolshevik Russia in 1920 led them for a time to draw closer to Germany. The negotiations which culminated in the Franco-Soviet Treaty heightened their fears of Russia and in 1934 a pact of non-aggression was signed between Poland and Nazi Germany. The mood, however, changed dramatically in 1938 when Germany demanded the incorporation of Danzig in the Reich. Relations deteriorated rapidly and Poland obtained a British guarantee of her territorial integrity.

In August 1939 the Ribbentrop-Molotov agreement provided for a fresh partition of Poland along what was known as the Curzon Line. Western Poland was completely incorporated into the Reich, the rest of Poland up to the Curzon line was constituted under German rule into what was known as the General Government and the portion of the country east of the line was included in Russia. The lot of the Poles in all zones was profoundly unhappy. Jews and those Poles who were considered 'intractable' were deported from the German Reich in large numbers, while those who were allowed to remain were treated as inferior

beings. At the same time the Nazis frankly declared their intention of denuding the General Government of industrial plant and converting it into a colonial economy. Hundreds of thousands of Poles were deported from Russian occupied Poland or sent to forced labour camps and many Polish prisoners simply disappeared.

In 1941 Germany attacked Russia and quickly overran the whole of Poland. A Polish Government in exile was set up, first in France and then in London, but even under the stress of the war with Germany, no real rapprochement between that Government and the Russians was possible. The Nazis in Poland behaved with almost incredible barbarity and it is believed that four million Jews were done to death during the occupation. Hatred of the Germans grew rapidly and an underground Polish Home Army of about two hundred thousand men was organized under General Bor, who acknowledged the authority of the Polish Government in London. At the beginning of 1944 that Government was persuaded to agree to the arrangement for the future of Poland made at the Teheran Conference. That arrangement provided for the complete expulsion of the German population from Poland, for the acceptance of the Curzon line as the boundary between Poland and Russia and for the transfer to Poland of certain areas of East Prussia.

In July 1944, when the Germans had begun to retire, the Soviet authorities set up a Polish Committee of National Liberation in Lublin, which needless to say consisted of reliable Communists. At about the same time the U.S.S.R. issued an appeal to the Poles in Warsaw to rise against the Nazis and so assist the Russians who were only ten miles away. It was indeed a stirring call 'Poles, the time of liberation is at hand! Poles, take to arms! Make every Polish house a stronghold in the fight against the invader! There is not a moment to lose.'

General Bor and the Home Army responded magnificently and within a few days two-thirds of Warsaw had been recaptured from the Germans. There was, however, no sign of Russian aid. Mikolajczyk, the Premier of the Polish Government in London, arrived in Moscow to plead for an immediate Russian advance on Warsaw, but was told bluntly that the Committee of National Liberation was the only Polish authority that Stalin would recognize. Mikolajczyk had in fact to choose between admitting leading members of that Committee to the Cabinet—and so giving a cloak of legality to the Committee—or leaving the Home Army to be annihilated. Mikolajczyk and his Government hesitated and in the process lost everything. No aid was forthcoming and in spite of its initial successes, within a few weeks the Home Army was destroyed.

It was not till January 1945 that the Red Army finally advanced on Warsaw. The rest of Poland was then quickly liberated from German rule. Friends of Poland have alleged that the Russians deliberately delayed their advance until the Home Army, which might have formed the focal point of nationalism in a resurrected Poland, was destroyed. This, however, is a matter of speculation rather than evidence and the Kremlin authorities have always maintained that it was strategically impossible to move on Warsaw earlier. Be that as it may, the practical effect of the destruction of the Home Army was that there remained no force capable of resisting the Communist régime now about to be imposed on Poland.

The Committee of National Liberation was then converted into the Provisional Government of Poland and after a great deal of haggling between Stalin, Roosevelt, Churchill and Mikolajczyk, a few members of the Polish Government in London were included in the Provisional Government, though other 'undesirable' potential candidates for membership were arrested by the Russian authorities. According to the usual Communist pattern, all key posts in that Government, including the Ministry of Internal Security, were held by Communists. The Militia (O.R.M.O.) was commanded by Communists, while many important posts in the Regular Army were held by Russians. Equally important was the fact that the Ministry of Regained Territories, which controlled the Polish areas taken from Germany and distributed the lands to docile persons, was manned by reliable Communists working under Gomulka. The efforts of all these Communists in key posts were reinforced by the considerable Red Army forces in the area.

Before the War, deep rooted suspicion of Russia had made conditions unpropitious for the growth of the Communist Party in Poland and indeed the existence of a vigorous, genuinely non-Communist Labour Party, known as the Polish Socialist Party, militated against such growth. The few Communist leaders had mainly taken refuge in Russia, where they had been treated with scant respect. With his usual dislike of a 'national' Communist Party Stalin in 1938 expressed distrust of the Polish Communist Party and dissolved it. In 1942, it was revived under the name of the Polish Workers' Party and operated as an underground movement behind the German lines. Most of its leaders at this stage were Russians, though after the defeat of the Germans the Pole, Gomulka, became Vice-Premier and General Secretary of the Party. The Communist Government in Poland was nevertheless a very artificial entity.

The methods by which the Communists secured their grip on Catholic Poland followed the now familiar pattern too closely to require detailed

description. The Socialist Party was forced to amalgamate with the Communist Party and when Mikolajczyk's Polish People's Party—which though anti-Communist stood for radical reforms—refused to follow suit, police terror was used ruthlessly against it, even though Mikolajczyk himself was in the Government. As the elections of 1947 approached it was observed that the great mass of the people, alike in town and country, supported Mikolajczyk and terrorism therefore had to be heightened. Mikolajzcyk claims that one hundred thousand members of his Party and one hundred and forty-two of his candidates were imprisoned and that in nearly a quarter of the country persons on his list of candidates were disqualified. In any case the system of 'voluntary open voting' made it dangerous to oppose the police and the Communists secured an overwhelming majority. The persecution continued even after the elections and Mikolajczyk soon left Poland in despair.

To all appearances, Communism was now firmly clamped on to a reluctant Poland. Great pressure was brought to bear on the peasants to accept collectivization of agriculture; the Catholic Church was persecuted; free speech was suppressed and art and literature controlled; the secret police became a universal terror; and the armed forces were kept firmly under Russian control, through the agency of Marshal Rokossovsky, who though a Pole by birth was a Soviet citizen and a Marshal of the Soviet Army. The most damning evidence of Russian repression is provided by Leon Wudsky, himself a leading Communist, after the revolution of 1947. He referred to people who were caught in the streets and released after several days of interrogation, unfit to live. 'These people had to be taken to lunatic asylums. Others sought refuge in the asylum to avoid the security police. Men in panic, even honest men, were fleeing abroad to escape our system. . . . The whole city knew that people were being murdered. The whole city knew that there were cells in which people were kept for three weeks standing in excrements . . . cold water was poured on people who were left in the cold to freeze.'

Discontent and bitterness were almost universal. As Catholics, the great majority of Poles hated Communism; as sturdy individualists they bitterly resented collectivization; and as Poles they hated the Russians. Even as early as 1947, Wladyslaw Gomulka, a pre-war Polish Communist who was at this time First Secretary to the Party, declared that Poland must follow her own path to Socialism 'and along this road . . . the dictatorship of a single party is neither essential nor has it any purpose'* This was rank heresy. Gomulka was soon removed from his offices in the

* Quoted in *Spring in October* by Konrad Syrop on which much of this section is based.

Party and the Government and in 1951 was arrested. It was not, however, until after the death of Stalin and the resulting partial relaxation of tyranny in Moscow that the discontent began to appear above the surface, a process which was stimulated in 1954 by the revelations of an officer in the Ministry of Public Security regarding the methods constantly employed by the Security police. Dissension now sprang up among inside the top level leadership and the 'progressive' members of the Polish Politburo considered that concessions must be made to appease the masses, while the reactionaries urged that a still further tightening of control was essential. Reliable evidence regarding the discussions inside the Central Committee and the Politburo is, of course, not available but the action which soon followed showed that the progressives had won. Important officials of the Ministry of Security were imprisoned or dismissed; writers and journalists were allowed a new freedom to criticize the repression from which Poland had suffered; Ochab, the new First Secretary of the Party, spoke bitterly of 'the mistakes made by the Party in previous years'; and in April 1956, for the first time, the régime was openly and severely criticized in what had up to then been a shadow of a Parliament.

By this time the Polish economy was on the verge of collapse. Food was in short supply, the standard of living had gone down and conditions in factories were chaotic. The unrest, which had been most marked amongst the intellectuals, now spread to the masses and in June 1956 a delegation of workers went to Warsaw from Potznan to voice their complaints. This was indeed a new freedom, but as might be expected it soon led to violence. For a whole day rioters were in complete control of Poznan. Order was soon restored, but there was no doubt about the bitterness of popular feeling and the hands of the liberalizers in the Politburo were strengthened.

Gomulka was readmitted to the Party—in which he again became First Secretary—and the meeting of the Seventh Plenum decided to give greater powers to Parliament, to grant a greater measure of freedom of speech and writing and to discontinue pressure for collectivization. More significant still, the trial of those charged with serious violence in the Poznan riots appears to have been conducted with complete justice.

The reactionaries in the Politburo made one last effort to save the situation. They made preparations for a military *coup d'état*, but their plans became known and it was soon clear that the Polish troops would not carry out their orders.

Moscow now became seriously alarmed at these developments. While

the Eighth Plenum was sitting in October 1956, a delegation from the U.S.S.R. consisting of Khrushchev and three others arrived in Warsaw, obviously in the hope of overawing the Plenum. That they were unsuccessful was proved by Gomulka's address to the Plenum—one of the most remarkable addresses ever given by a genuine Communist. He condemned the policy of forced collectivization; he referred to the reviving and healthy current that had stirred the Party masses to demand the truth; he decried the idea that Socialism could be built only by Communists; and he declared that the Polish road to Socialism might well be different from that of the U.S.S.R. or Yugoslavia. At the same time he emphasized the need for Polish independence and affirmed his belief in 'democratization'.

Remarkable though this speech was, it must not be thought that Gomulka was advocating unlimited freedom and independence in the Western sense. The freedom to which he referred left two subjects which could not be criticized—the dominance of the Communist Party and the alliance with Russia. Poland was to be independent, but she could not exist without the sheltering might of Russia. Poland at this time was deeply stirred by the Hungarian Revolution, but that Revolution ended in disaster and in a later speech Gomulka warned the Poles against provoking the tragic consequences which in Hungary had led to the calling in of Russian troops.

Gomulka's speech was not just empty words. A satisfactory agreement was soon made with the Catholic Church. The Communist Government would recognize religious freedom while the Church would support the Government in things secular. Soviet officers in the Polish army were replaced by Poles and even Marshal Rokossovsky was soon sent back to Russia. Peasants began dissolving the collectives and were indeed allowed to do so, though Gomulka gave every possible financial help to producers' co-operatives. In the elections of 1957, candidates were limited to parties in line with the Communists, but their numbers exceeded the number to be elected, so that some freedom of choice of individuals existed.

Gomulka had in fact to perform what a recent writer has described as a balancing act. He was a sincere Communist who believed that a free and independent Poland could only be a Socialist Poland, and yet he knew that the great majority of the Poles were deeply anti-Communist and could not be forced along the Communist path. He did in fact give Poland a degree of freedom which she had not enjoyed for some years, and more remarkable still, thanks largely to the fact that with the Hungarian troubles on her hands the U.S.S.R. could not afford to embroil

herself too deeply in Poland, he secured Khrushchev's approval to the new order of things.

In the last two or three years, however, under Russian pressure the Communist Party has to some extent tightened its grip over Poland again. The Workers' Councils, set up spontaneously by the workers in 1956, have been deprived of all influence and completely subordinated to the Communist Party. Every aspect of the worker's life and even his leisure is now under the control of the Party. Wages are fixed by the State; there is relentless pressure on Stakhanovite lines for the continued increase of production norms and the trades unions have no power whatsoever to protect the interest of the worker. Amongst the agriculturalists too, discontent has been rife, particularly since the price paid to the farmer for meat was lowered in 1959. He responded by decreasing supplies and the resulting meat shortage led to an all-round tightening of economic control.

Writers and intellectuals, who rejoiced in new-found freedom in 1956, have been sharply reminded of the limits which they must not transgress. Censorship was reintroduced and then intensified. Authors have been told that they have no right to criticize 'the building of socialism and action has been taken against revisionists'.

The Catholic Church too, has encountered greater difficulties than seemed likely just after the uprising in 1956. The millenium of the conversion of Poland to Christianity is to be celebrated in 1966 and the campaign of moral regeneration inaugurated by Cardinal Wysznsk in preparation for that great event has created considerable alarm in the minds of the Communist authorities, who are well aware how deeply Catholic Poland resents the Communist régime. Religious instruction in school time is now forbidden, priests have been harshly treated by officials in many places and altogether the relations between Church and State are again uneasy.

In the sphere of foreign relations Poland has been brought very firmly under Russian control, and while there is evidence that the Polish people look to the West rather than the East, the Government itself joins Khrushchev in his denunciation of the democracies.

Poland has not enjoyed the freedom of which many dreamed in 1956, but on the other hand she does not suffer the unqualified tyranny which is so evident in some of Russia's satellites.

THE HUNGARIAN REVOLUTION

The success of the Polish uprising was partly due to its gradualness and moderation. In Hungary, on the other hand, the corresponding movement was dramatically sudden and of such force as to make large-scale military intervention by the U.S.S.R. almost inevitable. Fortunately for our purpose these proceedings were subsequently studied by a special committee of the United Nations and the main facts are clearly established.

Towards the end of 1955 the first open signs of discontent with the Communist régime began to appear, but they did not become serious until Rakosi, following the new Moscow pattern, confessed that a number of the victims of persecution had been condemned on fabricated charges. Public indignation at this revelation was boundless and the removal of Rakosi from office a little later did nothing to damp it down. Discussions in which the government was severely criticized were organized even by such bodies as the Communist Youth. Students were particularly active in these proceedings, and to placate them, in October 1956 the Education Minister decided to abolish the compulsory study of Russian in schools. This success merely whetted the appetite of young men enjoying their first taste of freedom of speech. Meetings began to be arranged all over the country. In the first place the students dealt with practical matters affecting their school and college life, but they soon went on to demand the return of Imre Nagy, the expulsion of Russian troops and the recognition of the rights of the citizens. They framed a resolution containing sixteen points of which the most important were those in which the sponsors demanded a new economic policy, freedom of the press, new elections and the removal of Russian troops.

The radio authorities refused to broadcast this resolution and its publication was forbidden. The prohibition was meaningless and merely led to an atmosphere of excitement thus described by one who took part in it, 'Every stenographer and every typist did nothing but copy these things. . . . Everyone was talking about it; in conversation, over the telephone, the news spread in a few hours. . . . People pinned the Hungarian national cockade to their clothes . . . the whole people became unified . . . the entire system based on lies collapsed in a moment on the morning of the 23rd October.'*

Demonstrations in Budapest in support of publication of the sixteen-point Resolution were entirely peaceful, but on October 25 the action

* Quoted in *Hungary*, a volume in the Mid-European Studies Centre Series.

of the special A.V.H. police in firing on the crowd seriously inflamed passions. Workers from neighbouring areas flocked into the capital to join the students, and many soldiers who supported them provided them with arms. According to the United Nations Report, the army practically disintegrated.

The revolt soon spread to the provinces. Revolutionary and Workers Councils were set up to take over authority from the various Communist authorities. They declared their intention of restoring a democratic form of government and they endorsed the sixteen points of the students' resolution.

The Prime Minister Gero left the country and Imre Nagy formed a government consisting of non-Communists as well as Communists. Battles between the insurgents and the A.V.H. had now gone on for several days, but Nagy's first act was to order a cease-fire while he negotiated for the removal of U.S.S.R. troops. At the same time he announced his intention of dissolving the A.V.H. and ending the one-party system of government. He then reconstituted his Cabinet, including in it representatives of the smallholders and the National Peasants. Many political prisoners, including Cardinal Mindszenty, were released.

The U.S.S.R., however, had only used the negotiations as a means of playing for time. Soviet forces advanced in battle formation and attacked the capital. Kadar, the First Secretary of the Party, who had at first supported Nagy and had declared that Hungary must follow its own path to Socialism, 'not by slavishly imitating foreign example', now changed round completely. With armed Soviet support he formed a new government, though it was quite clear that the real authority rested with the Soviet military command.

Fierce fighting continued for some days, but the end was inevitable. The revolution was ruthlessly crushed. Many thousands of citizens were deported and the power of the newly formed Revolutionary Council was soon broken by the Russian forces. By the end of 1956 non-Communist organizations had been completely excluded from public life. Freedom of speech had again ceased to exist. The Kadar régime had no popular support and had indeed to face passive resistance which was only broken by measures so severe that, according to the United Nations report, one hundred and ninety thousand Hungarians left the country. Nagy, who was abducted by the Russian authorities shortly after the installation of Kadar, and subsequently executed, had struggled valiantly for the liberties of his people, but had been broken by the might of the Soviet military machine.

The outside world, partly because of the complications of the Suez episode, was unable to lift a finger in support of the Hungarian fight for freedom. Russia, which had consistently aimed at domination of all the Communist countries of Central and Eastern Europe, was thus able to set off the successful repression of revolt in Hungary, against her defeat in Yugoslavia and her partial failure in Poland.

IX

The Communist Revolution in China

WE MUST now turn from Europe to the East and obviously we must begin with China.

Economic factors and the political structure of society combined to make the nineteenth century a bleak period for the great mass of the Chinese people. Population had trebled itself within a hundred years and by 1850 the average area of cultivated land per head was rather less than half an acre. Although the social system had some feudal characteristics, the peasant was free to sell his land and the pressure of poverty at this time made such sales frequent. Land thus became increasingly concentrated in the hands of the landlords and the class of landless labourers grew continually.

Although the landlords were in the main small owners by European standards, all government administration in the districts was in their hands and the fact that they were able not only to raise rents exorbitantly, but also, in their capacity of revenue collectors, to impose on the peasantry an unfair share of the burden of taxation, led to ever-growing resentment. Not even the Confucian teaching of obedience could any longer damp down the rising discontent and in the last century before the revolution, peasant rebellions were almost endemic.

Towards the end of the century, the impact of the outside world, from which China had been protected until the opium war of 1839, made an already explosive situation even more dangerous. In the first place the import of foreign goods under a very low tariff crippled important village industries and further impoverished the peasantry. Secondly, the humiliations experienced by China at the hands of the Western powers and Russia revealed the incompetence of the Manchu dynasty either to defend the country, or to provide the impulse to economic development, without which China, now forced out of isolation, could never compete with advanced countries. Thirdly, Western ideas created in the minds of the Chinese intelligentsia grave doubts about the philosophy on which their society rested. As a Chinese writer puts it 'during these crucial years when other nations, notably Japan, were modernizing themselves through industrialization, China entered an age of dissolution. The old order broke down at last under the combined weight of great domestic poverty and foreign imperialism.'

The revolution of 1911 was indeed inevitable. Unfortunately Sun Yat-sen, the outstanding figure of the new Republic, was a great but unpractical visionary. He allowed Yuan Shik-kai—whose sole aim was to destroy the monarchy and take its place—to become the first President of the Republic. The jealousy of Yuan's generals, who were financed by the Japanese, frustrated Yuan's plan, and after his death in 1916 the authority of the Peking Government was mainly nominal. Real power passed into the hands of the competing war lords. Soldiers battened on the countryside, law and order ceased to exist, the civil services were demoralized and China showed all the signs of disintegration.

Sun Yat-sen and his Republican party—which was later renamed the Kuomintang—established a somewhat ineffective rival government in Canton.

Sun Yat-sen set before Republican China three high aims which may roughly be described as nationalism, democracy and economic reform, but in the course of two decades was able to do little towards implementing them. His failure was due to two main causes. In the first place it was impossible for China to modernize her economy without outside aid. Sun Yat-sen appealed to the West in vain for that assistance. Secondly, he was unable to cope—and it is doubtful if anybody could have coped—with the reactionary forces and the military commanders who grouped themselves round him as they had done round the Peking government.

Up to this time, those Chinese intellectuals who had looked to the West had not paid much attention to Communism, which according to Marxist theories was indeed only relevant to conditions in an advanced industrial country. By 1917, however, they were conscious that the country was disintegrating and that the revolution had achieved virtually nothing. The Russian Revolution and the personality of Lenin therefore made a great impact on some of these thinkers and in 1918 a society for the study of Marxism was founded in Peking university. Its members were inquirers rather than convinced Communists, but Chinese resentment of foreign encroachment was strong at that time and Lenin's teaching that international finance capital was to blame for the backwardness of the underdeveloped countries met with a ready response. Japan was the immediate enemy, but the record of the Western powers, who had been allied with the Japanese in the First World War, was also prominent in Chinese minds. Strong nationalist feeling was thus the catalytic agent which led many of these inquirers to become Communists.

Loose groups of Communists, or those who sympathized with them, began to be formed in 1920, but there were no Chinese professional

revolutionaries and they had little idea of how to organize a party. The Comintern promptly sent an agent, Voitinsky, to Shanghai to fill the blank. Great difficulty was experienced by the Communists in making contact with the urban working classes and the Comintern soon decided that it must temporarize with the forces of nationalism and make use of the Kuomintang.

The first manifesto of the Chinese Communist party, issued in June 1922, recognized that the Kuomintang could properly be described as a revolutionary body and threw out a hint that collaboration might be possible. An alliance with the Communists was rejected by Sun Yat-sen, but in August 1922 Moscow took the surprising line that 'the Kuomintang was not a bourgeois body, but a coalition party of all classes'. In spite of the protests of the Chinese Communists, the Comintern directed party members to join the Kuomintang as individuals while still maintaining their loyalty to the Communist party—thus anticipating the policy of the United Front, which was to be followed in Europe in the fourth decade of the century.

By 1923, Sun Yat-sen had come to feel that an alliance with the Communists would be advantageous and in response to his request Borodin was sent from Moscow to organize the Kuomintang. It is interesting to note that though Russia cultivated friendly relations with and made considerable concessions to the Peking Government, the Comintern supported the Kuomintang which was still in name a rebel body—a dualism which was to appear again in Russia's dealings with Western Europe a decade or so later. The Russian Government therefore insisted that Borodin was not a Soviet envoy, but a private citizen in the service of the Kuomintang. The statement deceived nobody.

The Kuomintang contained not only left-wingers, who might be expected to have some affinity with the Communists, but a strong section of extreme right-wingers—the men in fact who had made it impossible for Sun Yat-sen to achieve significant reforms. A coalition of the Communists with the Kuomintang so constituted could not long endure. Although collaboration continued from 1923 to 1927, it was uneasy from the start. Each member of the alliance felt that he was using the other for his own purposes. Sun Yat-sen regarded the Communists as a subordinate group in the Kuomintang and said bluntly, with reference to one of the Communist leaders, Ch'en, 'if Ch'en disobeys our party, he will be ousted'. The Communists on the other hand saw the arrangement as temporary—a tactical means of widening Communist influence amongst the masses. It was in fact the implementation of the policy expounded in

1920, at the Second Congress of the Comintern, namely, that 'while extending support to middle-class nationalists. Communist leaders were expected to make every effort to arrange and organize the working masses and to penetrate and gain leadership over existing revolutionary movements'. The line to be adopted by Communists in the Kuomintang or other non-Communist organizations was laid down peremptorily: 'Every question must be discussed and decided upon during an earlier meeting of the parasite faction; secondly, all faction members must act and vote as a unit on all questions within meetings of the non-Communist body or institution.'

Right-wing leaders in the Kuomintang soon began to complain of the double allegiance of their Communist colleagues, but Sun Yat-sen, who understood little of practical questions, smoothed things over for a time. After his death in 1925, friction increased rapidly, and immediately after Chiang Kai-shek's forcible seizure of power in the Kuomintang in 1926, the Central Executive Committee of that body passed two resolutions, limiting Communist membership in the more important committees of the Kuomintang to one-third, and debarring Communists from office in the Kuomintang's central organization.

The Communists, still under Moscow control, accepted this position for two reasons. In the first place Stalin and his colleagues consistently underestimated Chiang Kai-shek and believed that they could use him just as long as it suited them and then discard him. Secondly they continued to misunderstand the revolutionary possibilities of China at that time. It was part of the Marxist-Leninist dogma that the proletariat must lead a revolution, but in point of fact the urban workers were in a mood of sullen indifference, while the countryside was seething with discontent. Full-blooded support for radical agrarian reforms would have greatly strengthened the Communist position, but the Moscow Communists could not persuade themselves that a revolution might be led by the peasants.

At this stage events in Shanghai greatly strengthened the Kuomintang-Communist revolutionary forces. In May 1925 a strike in a Japanese mill led to a disorderly demonstration by students against the arrest of some of the strike leaders, and the foreign controlled police of the International Settlement were compelled to open fire. The firing may have been justified, but it produced a wave of indignation throughout China similar in intensity to that created in India by the tragedy of the Jalianwala Bagh. The resulting upsurge of national feeling had little or nothing to do with economic or social reform. It was indeed pure xenophobia and it led to

bitter feeling against the Peking government and the northern war lords, who were popularly believed to be in league with the foreigner and who in any case were unable or unwilling to secure the abolition of the Concessions.

It was in this atmosphere of intense nationalism that in July 1926 Chiang Kai-shek launched the Northern Expedition against the northern war lord Chang Tso-lin. It was immensely successful. City after city fell to the Nationalist armies and with every victory the anti-foreign fury seemed to grow, until, when Nanking was captured, foreign residents were only rescued by the intervention of British warships.

Although these triumphs greatly enhanced Chiang Kai-shek's prestige, the expedition opened out new dangers for him. The Communists, who were collaborating in the expedition, knew only too well how to utilize for their own purposes the revolutionary feeling which had been engendered. It is true that since many of the officers of the Kuomintang were landlords, Stalin had directed that the confiscation of the property of landlords should be suspended and that the 'excesses of the peasants' should be curbed. In spite of these orders, the local Communist propagandist stirred up agrarian discontent throughout the rural areas, while at the same time under Comintern instructions they fomented widespread labour troubles in Shanghai and organized strikes against the war lords who dominated that city. Chiang Kai-shek realized that unless he asserted himself, he might soon find that the initiative had passed wholly to the Communists. He had moreover a compelling reason for breaking the alliance. During Chiang's absence in the field, Borodin had persuaded the left-wing element in the Kuomintang to transfer the capital to Wuhan and to set up the left-winger Wang Ching-wei as the leader of the party. This move was ill-timed. As soon as Chiang Kai-shek had driven out the military ruler of Shanghai and established himself firmly in that city, he broke openly with the Communists as well as with the left wing of the Kuomintang and established his government at Nanking.

Stalin obstinately clung to alliance with the left-wing rival government in Wuhan. 'There has commenced', he declared, 'a turn from the revolution of the entire United Front to the revolution of the masses of farmers and peasants . . . to the agrarian revolution which will strengthen the fight . . . against imperialism, against the gentry and feudal landowners, against the militarists and against the counter-revolutionary group of Chiang Kai-shek'.

If this had really been the beginning of a policy based firmly on an agrarian revolution, it might have succeeded. It failed for two reasons.

Borodin and his colleagues insisted that the Wuhan government should attack Nanking. Once again, therefore, the officer-landlords must not be antagonized and the agrarian revolution which could have attracted the support of the peasants, was put into partial cold storage. A subsidiary reason was that a cable from Moscow to M. N. Roy, which he incautiously or deliberately revealed to Wang Ching-wei, made it clear to the latter that the Communists proposed to discard him and his colleagues when convenient. He reacted promptly and discarded them instead. Soon after this episode, the two wings of the Kuomintang were reunited at Nanking.

By July 1927 it was clear that the policy of collaboration with the Kuomintang had failed miserably. In desperation, the Chinese Communist leaders took to 'putchism'. Insurrections in Namchang, Chengsa and Canton later in the year were complete failures. It has been said that at the end of 1927, Russian influence in China was almost annihilated. In reality, as that acute analyst of Chinese Communism, Benjamin Schwarz points out, it had made more progress than was apparent. The Chinese Communist leaders had learned the technique of party organization; they had realized the value of the Leninist formula for revolution—an intellectual *élite* plus mass discontent—and perhaps most important of all, Chinese intellectuals had been profoundly influenced by Marxist-Leninist thought.

Two factors were soon to create a new and more powerful wave of Communism than China had yet experienced. After the split in the Kuomintang, the Chiang Kai-shek Government at Nanking moved far to the right and fell completely into the hands of reactionaries. Chiang's own energy and resources were devoted to the struggle to maintain himself in power, rather than to long overdue economic reforms, and even the progressive measures that were enacted were seldom enforced. A law, for example, was passed fixing thirty-seven and a half per cent of the crop as the maximum permissible rent, but as administration was almost entirely in the hands of the landlords, they had little difficulty in disregarding it. Discontent among the peasants mounted and they soon came to realize that there was no hope for them from Nanking.

At this juncture, the rise of Mao Tse-tung, who understood how to capitalize this discontent, was the second factor in the resurgence of Communism. It enabled the Chinese Communists to break away from the unsound strategy which had been forced on them by Moscow. Stalin had never been able to disregard the Marxist idea that the urban workers were the only vital factor in a revolution. Labour in China was in fact concerned not with a change of government, but with the economic

grievances of daily life. Stalin nevertheless refused to let the Chinese Communist party concentrate on those problems, for fear that they would lose sight of the real objective, revolution, which he believed to be imminent. The attempts of the Communists 'to break down the iron wall of proletarian indifference therefore failed'.

Mao Tse-tung on the other hand, who was himself of peasant extraction and had been concerned since 1925 with the formation of peasants unions in Hunan, realized that the revolutionary potential in China lay in the countryside. He advocated a policy of arming the peasants, forming Soviets wherever possible—though Stalin considered this premature—and liquidating the landlords. In 1927 his thoughts on these subjects were set down in one of the most vivid of Communist documents—'A Report on the Peasant Movement of Hunan'. After declaring that 'all imperialists, war lords, corrupt officials and bad gentry will meet their doom at the hands of the peasants' he went on to defend the peasants' excesses. 'Revolution is not a dinner party, nor literary composition, nor painting, nor embroidery. It cannot be done so delicately, so leisurely, gentlemanly . . . an absolute peasant power must be established. No criticism of the Peasants' Association should be allowed . . . the gentry's power must be totally liquidated, the gentry knocked down, even trodden on . . . The force of the peasantry', he declared, 'is like that of the raging winds and driving rain. It is rapidly increasing in violence. No force can stand in its way.'

The Peasants' Associations to which Mao referred had become widespread from about 1926 and Mao used them as the focal points for rural soviets in direct opposition to the directions of the Comintern, which still attached primary importance to activities in the towns and obstinately clung on to the belief in proletarian leadership. The unsuccessful Autumn Harvest Uprising of late 1927 gave Mao an opportunity to put into practice another part of his policy. He organized an army, comprised mainly of peasants with a few miners and Kuomintang deserters and when the rising failed he kept part of the army together in the mountains between Hunan and Kiangsi. This was indeed the nucleus of the famous Red Army.

At the time of the Autumn Rising, Mao's army was on the whole ineffective, but by 1929 it had become a formidable force described by European journalists as poorly armed, but well disciplined and intelligently led. In 1930 the Red Army captured the important town of Changsha, but was driven out after four days, largely because the help expected from the urban workers was not forthcoming. Far more important than

this expedition was the fact that Mao's force now began to spread over large areas and simultaneously Mao organized a large number of rural soviets. He was in fact becoming more important than the official leaders of the Central Committee of the Communist Party in Shanghai, and when in 1930 Chiang Kai-shek launched his campaign to exterminate the Communists, the guerrilla warfare which was the only possible defence strengthened Mao's position further. In 1931 Mao became Chairman of the Soviet Provisional Government which was established in the areas under Soviet control, with its capital at Juichin in Kiangsi, and when in the following year the Central Committee moved its headquarters from Shanghai to Juichin, Mao was well on the road to becoming the undisputed leader of the Chinese Communists—a position which he officially achieved in 1935 after ruthlessly eliminating many of his Communist opponents and rivals.

Chiang's attacks on the Communists were devastating and culminated in an economic blockade so tight that the people of many areas were on the verge of starvation when in 1934 the Communists decided to evacuate Kiangsi for the remote area of Shensi. The dramatic story of the Long March, which has rightly been described as an Odyssey unequalled in modern times, is too well known to require to be told here. Although the evacuation might have seemed for the moment to be an admission of failure, the Long March was in reality an important cause of the Communists' ultimate success. It gave Mao and his colleagues time to re-group and re-train their forces; it toughened the moral and physical fibre of all ranks; and it took Communist influence to North China and Manchuria.

For some years Japanese aggression in Manchuria had been a cause of grave anxiety to both Russia and China. It was clear that an all-out drive by Chiang Kai-shek against the Japanese would strengthen the Communist position in China and also lessen the Japanese threat to Russia. It was equally clear that Chiang could not and would not embark on such a drive as long as hostilities between the Kuomintang and the Chinese Communists continued. In August 1935, while the Long March was still in progress, Mao Tse-tung sought to break the deadlock by offering to co-operate with the Kuomintang in an Anti-Japanese People's United Front. Chiang appeared reluctant to accept this offer, but after his capture in December 1936 by a Northern war lord who was determined to force Chiang to resist the Japanese, the Communists acted as mediators. Chiang then agreed to a working alliance provided the Communists undertook to integrate the Red Army into the National Army, to dissolve the Soviet Republic and to suspend Red propaganda in China. Neither party was

required to abandon its long-term aims. In 1937, before the negotiations were concluded, the Japanese attacked China in full force, and without further ado the Kuomintang and the Communists agreed to co-operate against them. There was some dissension amongst the Communists as to the ultimate object of the alliance. Mao made it very clear that his aim was to defeat the Japanese first and then deal forcibly with the Kuomintang. Another Communist group headed by Chang Kuo-t'ao advocated a more sincere form of co-operation in the hope that the Communists would thereby secure a dominant position in the Kuomintang. Mao's view prevailed and to make assurance doubly sure, he appears to have executed many of those who disagreed with him.

The co-operation of the Communists with the Kuomintang was thus nominal rather than real. The United Front soon became a mockery and Communist and Kuomintang forces frequently fought each other rather than the common enemy. The main attention of the Communists during this period was devoted to recruiting and training the Red Army, carrying out intensive propaganda and establishing 'border governments' in the continuously expanding areas under their control. Non-Communists in those areas were wooed by a considerable liberalization of the normal Soviet system, while great energy was put into the Cheng-feng Movement intended to mould the thought and action of Chinese Communists in a common pattern. In the economic sphere, Mao's New Democracy differed considerably from the Russian system. Private enterprise was not to be abolished, but limited in its scope and carefully controlled. Banks, big industries and big commercial establishments were to be State-owned, but 'in the meantime the State will not confiscate other forms of private property and would not forbid the development of capitalist production so long as it is taken for granted that it does not affect the people's livelihood'. Mao went on to say that 'the reason for this procedure is that the Chinese economy is still in a very backward state'—the ultimate objective of complete State socialism was not abandoned.

The progress of the Party was steady and by 1944, according to an American observer, the Communists controlled territory occupying about one-fifth of China, containing a population of seventy million and having its own army, law and money.

While the Communists were growing in strength and perfecting their organization, Chiang was steadily becoming more unpopular. His assumption of a large measure of arbitrary power during the war may have been necessary, but it was resented. More serious, however, was the fact that

he was closely surrounded by reactionaries and completely failed to check the wartime inflation which pressed hardly on all classes. His administration was corrupt and inefficient.

In spite of these developments, Stalin and his colleagues, in contrast to their mistaken optimism of the thirties, considered in 1945 that 'the development of the uprising in China had no prospect'. He therefore advised Mao to dissolve his army and to join the Chiang Kai-shek Government. Once again Mao's judgment was sounder than that of Stalin and he declined to follow this advice. After the Japanese surrender, there was a wild scramble between the Communists and the Kuomintang for the possession of areas which had been in enemy occupation. The Communists were helped considerably in this by Russia's failure to withdraw promptly from Manchuria in accordance with the treaty of friendship and alliance between Russia and China. By the time the Russians did withdraw, the Communists were in effective control and Chiang was never able to dislodge them. In 1946 full scale war broke out between the Chinese Communists and the Kuomintang. The statesmen of the U.S.A., who had consistently misunderstood the China situation, persuaded themselves, first that the Chinese Communists were not real Communists at all and then that Chiang could be maintained in power and that the Communists could be persuaded to support him. The Marshall Mission, which was intended to bring about an alliance of this kind, was foredoomed to failure.

It was followed in 1947 by an even more inept U.S.A. policy of massive aid to Chiang Kai-shek, to the extent of nearly $1,500 million, much of it in the form of military stores and equipment. It seems possible that an important result of this foreign aid was to damage Chiang Kai-shek and his government still further in Chinese eyes. Be this as it may, the Communist troops were in a far better fighting mood than their Kuomintang enemies, and the American Consul General reported the Communists' ever-mounting superiority. He referred to 'nationalist soldiers discouraged over prospects of getting reinforcements, better solidarity in the fighting spirit of the Communists . . . and growing indignation (at the Nationalists) over the disparity between officers' enrichment and soldiers' low pay'.

The Communists indeed were crusaders on behalf of a strange and harsh new religion, while Chiang and his associates were concerned mainly to preserve an archaic and indefensible system of privilege and corruption. General Wedemeyer, sent by President Truman in 1947 to appraise the situation, reported shrewdly that 'adoption by the U.S. of a policy motivated solely towards stopping the expansion of Communism

without regard to the continued extension of an unpopular repressive government would render any aid ineffective. Wavering elements might turn away from the existing government to Communism'. The President did not take this salutary advice and the wavering elements did turn as predicted. Chiang was completely discredited and on September 21, 1949, the establishment of the People's Republic of China was proclaimed in Peking amidst almost universal acclamation. The Communists had triumphed in spite of nearly thirty years of bad advice from Moscow.

A comparison of the Russian and Chinese Revolutions must take account of the great wealth of revolutionary experience possessed by the Chinese leaders in 1949. Within four decades, China had undergone three successful revolutions. Although the revolution of 1911 failed to achieve many of its objects and led to the anarchy of the war-lord period, it loosened the bonds of tradition and so prepared the way for later progress. The second revolution, which began with the Northern Expedition and led to the establishment by Chiang Kai-shek in Nanking of a government recognized by the world, achieved more than is generally recognized. It might, but for three factors, have ushered in a liberal régime under which Communism would have withered away. Unfortunately it fell into the hands of reactionaries and gave no relief to the peasants; it failed to oppose to the Japanese the resistance the national spirit demanded; it was, moreover, an artificial union of two elements, the Kuomintang and the Communists, which had little in common. It nevertheless began the process of modernizing China with considerable help from the U.S.A. More important still, the uneasy alliance with the Communists gave the leaders the opportunity of learning the practical business of administration in the areas under their control, before they assumed the government of the country. The Russian Revolution on the other hand was a *coup d'état.* The rulers of Russia immediately after the Bolshevik revolution were theorists with nothing to guide them except the sacred Marxist texts. They inevitably fell into errors, such as the immediate wholesale nationalization of industry, which the more experienced Chinese Communists were able to avoid.

Another important difference between the Chinese and Russian Revolutions was the much broader basis on which the Chinese Communist party rested. In both countries the overwhelming majority of the populace were agriculturalists, but in Russia the Revolution was based on the very small minority of urban workers. The peasants indeed welcomed the help of the Communists in dispossessing the landlords of their lands, but there was no bond of sympathy between them and the intellectuals who

dominated the revolution. Mao Tse-tung on the other hand was himself a peasant whose life had been spent amongst his own kind. To trust him was natural and moreover the peasants had learned that they could expect no amelioration of their lot from the Kuomintang.

Again, Lenin and Trotsky had to rely on seducing soldiers from their allegiance, first to the Tsar and then to the Provisional Government. Mao Tse-tung on the other hand had trained his own army and schooled them amidst the hardships of guerilla warfare.

One other factor made the task of the Chinese Communists easier than that of their Russian preceptors. They were able to capitalize over a long period the almost universal Chinese hatred of foreign privilege and aggression and the general resentment of the failure of the previous revolutionary régimes to drive the foreigner out. In Russia, on the other hand, national feeling and fear or dislike of other countries only began to be roused after the Revolution had taken place.

In these important respects, therefore, the task of the Chinese Communists in 1949 was easier than that of the Russians in 1917. Perhaps for this reason they were able to move towards the ultimate Communist goal with more circumspection. They had no scruples about the use of force where it was required—and indeed the ruthless extermination of hundreds of thousands of their opponents in the first few years of the régime leaves no room for doubt on this point—but in general they were not under the necessity of forcing Communism by great violence on to unwilling masses.

X

The Communist Regime in China

FOUR FACTORS make it difficult to appraise the quality and results of Communist rule in China. In the first place reliable statistics of progress do not exist; secondly, views of foreign visitors vary from the starry-eyed admiration of the left-winger to the unreadiness of the die-hard to see anything good in a Communist country; thirdly, Communist jargon, in which such terms as 'democratic centralism' mean that people do what they are told, often obscures the facts; while, last but not least, there is between China and the West a psychological gulf so profound that it is difficult for the Westerner even to ask intelligent general questions.

It may, therefore, be wise at this stage to focus attention on certain concrete aspects of life in China in the hope that in the end a general picture will emerge.

THE RURAL COMMUNES

It will be convenient to start with the development of the Rural Communes, since they appear to be the focal point of the Chinese Communist system. This development may be said to have taken place in five stages —the distribution of the landlords' land, the formation of mutual aid teams, the organization of producer co-operatives, the conversion of the co-operatives into collectives in a fuller sense and finally the establishment of communes. It must not be supposed that the stages were as clear cut as this, or that there was not a good deal of overlapping.

The best outside estimates show that before the Communist Revolution, landlords held about one-third of the cultivated land of China and that the average landlord's holding was rather less than forty acres. By Western European or Russian standards they would have been accounted small landowners, but their existence was greatly resented, partly because pressure of population was so great that the average peasant's holding was about one-third of an acre per head, and partly because the landlords were able to enforce high rents and impose high taxes on their tenants. In many cases the landlord's share of the grain was as high as seventy per cent.

It was therefore a cardinal point in any policy of reform that the landlords must go, but, as we have seen, in the early years of Chinese Communism Moscow put the brake on agrarian reform. It was not until

about 1946 that, in the areas controlled by them, the Communists embarked on confiscation of land without payment to the landlords. The process was often preceded by violent anti-landlord propaganda and accompanied by force and disorder. In some areas even 'rich peasants', owning from eight to ten acres of land, were deprived of part of their property and equal distribution of all land was proclaimed as the Party aim.

When the Communists assumed the government of the country they put an end to these turbulent proceedings and regularized matters by the Land Reform Law 1950. That law divided the rural population into the five classes—landlords, rich peasants, middle peasants, poor peasants and farm labourers. The landlords were to be dispossessed, though they would thereafter get a share in the distributed land, while the rich peasants were to be left untouched, provided they cultivated at least half of their land themselves or by hired labour. They might continue to let out the other half if they wished. The middle and the poor peasants and the labourers were to receive a share of the lands resumed from the landlords.

Although the additional land secured by the peasants as a result of the distribution amounted in many areas to no more than one third of an acre, they found themselves able to retain more of their grain than formerly for their own consumption—a tendency which was encouraged by the adverse terms of trade between agriculture and industry. The towns therefore fell short of food and Mao Tse-tung's plans for industrialization were threatened. The compulsory sale of grain to State Purchasing Boards, at low prices fixed by the State, naturally led to a decline in production and defeated Mao's plans. The conclusion was reached that it was impossible to deal with perhaps one hundred million individual cultivators and the urge towards collectivization was therefore strengthened. The first steps in that direction had indeed been taken in 1951 when the 300,000 'cadres' who were employed to implement the Land Reform Law began to urge cultivators to form mutual aid teams. Under the mutual aid system, which was by no means new in China, each member kept his own holding and sold his own produce. The 'mutual aid' consisted in the pooling of resources of labour and implements.

The next stage in the development was the somewhat more closely knit agricultural producers' co-operative. All land of the members was pooled and worked in common, the total produce being shared in proportion to the amount of land, cattle and labour contributed. The land still belonged notionally to the individual members and they were also permitted to cultivate separate plots of land themselves and to sell the

produce privately. Membership of the co-operatives was voluntary and at least in theory members were free to withdraw from them.

Pressure to form co-operatives was gradually stepped up and from 1953 targets for progress began to be fixed. A good deal of resistance was experienced at some stages, particularly from the middle peasants, who had been led to join by assurances that they would thereby increase their income, but who in practice found themselves worse off than before. In 1955–6 a considerable number of them withdrew and a number of co-operatives had to be dissolved. To meet this threat the principle of inequality was therefore deliberately introduced into the co-operatives, work schedules being so arranged as to produce disparities of income. This carrot, however, was not enough without the stick and considerable difficulty was therefore put in the way of withdrawal.

A regulation of 1956 ushered in the next stage, in which the co-operative was to become a collective farm. Land was to be gradually transferred from the individual member to the collective farm, though members might still keep five per cent of their land for their own personal use—an almost negligible area. Cultivation and sale of the produce were under collective control and the nett income, after payment of taxes and provision of a sinking fund, was distributed according to the number of days worked. The amount of land contributed no longer affected entitlement to a share of the income. In theory the co-operatives or collectives were democratically run. In practice the chairman and office bearers were members of the Communist Party and ordinary members had to do what the cadres told them.

This created bitter resentment and although, under official pressure amounting almost to compulsion, the collectives grew rapidly, discontent abounded. Worse still, that discontent was allied to a revival of the sense of property, particularly amongst those middle peasants who had done well out of the distribution of the landlords' lands. It was even reported that 'families of many Party Cadres have now become well-to-do peasants and as a result many cadres are reluctant to criticize the capitalist tendency of the middle peasants'.

The First Secretary of the Provincial Committee in Hunan reported that 'Draft animals are lost and the productive force has declined . . . our ancestors knew how to look after draft animals and we socialist builders do not . . . the peasants are like beasts of burden today . . . girls and women pull ploughs and harrows with their wombs hanging down . . . co-operation is transformed into exploitation . . .'

The First Secretary and his colleagues were taken to task for this

attitude. They were accused of currying favour with the peasants by seeking a relaxation of the policy of collectivization and it was stated that as a result of their attitude 'landlords, rich peasants, counter-revolutionaries, bad elements and well-to-do middle peasants accustomed to capitalist ways of thinking applauded and agitated for withdrawal from their collectives, saying "big co-operatives will turn into small co-operatives", then into mutual aid teams and then back into individual farms.'

To counter these dangerous tendencies it was necessary to take the final step towards village socialism by converting the collectives to communes and thus eradicating the sense of property. There were other reasons leading to the same conclusion. Mao Tse-tung had decided that China must now take the Great Leap Forward—but China had neither the foreign exchange nor the internal capital necessary for this purpose. In a similar situation Lenin had spoken of 'obtaining subsidies from the labour of peasants'. An official Chinese spokesman now made it clear that the potential labour of the villages, where men worked perhaps two hundred days in the year, must be tapped without payment. It must in fact be dragooned into industrial work when and where required and this would be relatively easy if the peasants were deprived of their property. Moreover, the Communists had had practical experience of developing small scale industries in rural areas during their long guerilla campaigns and it seemed natural therefore to them to harness village labour to the task of industrial development.

The establishment of communes began about the middle of 1958, but it was not until August of that year that the new policy was officially formulated in a resolution of the Central Committee. The essence of the scheme was that all the property of the co-operatives, as well as that of the peasants, including their houses and all utensils, were to be transferred to the communes. The only exception was that, as a temporary measure, the peasant might keep a few domestic animals and poultry. His wage would be paid by the commune partly in cash and partly in the form of grain ration coupons. These coupons could only be used in the communal mess-hall, round which his life was to be focused. The Communists had, ever since the days of their guerilla warfare, been preaching the 'Five Togethers'—'the idea of a group of human beings who work, eat, sleep, study and play together without any personal privacy or possessions'. The cadres now waxed lyrical over the advantages of the communal life. The members of the commune were to be housed in communal buildings or temporarily in family flats without kitchens, while communal mess-halls, kindergartens, nurseries, tailoring teams, barbers' shops, public

baths, and happiness homes for old people, would lead the peasants to a collective life of greater happiness. Family life was not abolished, but it was treated as unnecessary, and as one Chinese journal put it, 'the institution of the family is to be superseded by the collective life of the community. . . . Home life often bred spoiled children indisposed towards labour'. Parents were scarcely necessary except for the act of procreation. 'They were unfit to educate their children not only in the academic sense but also in labour and morals.' The journal went on to express the view that no maternal love could ever hope to compare with 'society's' concern for the children.

The agricultural work of the commune was to be entirely reorganized. The commune should divide its farmlands into a number of cultivated areas and establish a corresponding number of cultivation teams . . . and suitably distribute its manpower, draft animals and farming equipment, according to production requirements'. Not a vestige of any connection between the individual and a particular plot of land was to remain.

Not only might members of the commune be employed in non-agricultural tasks seasonally, but—a far more drastic provision—they might be regularly drafted, either in their own localities or elsewhere, for mining, building or industrial work wherever required. According to some Chinese reports the peasants were marched to their work in military formation.

The August resolution had warned the cadres against hurrying or exercising undue compulsion in the establishment of the full commune system, but at this period a spirit of exuberance appeared to possess the entire party. The true Communist society, they felt, was now about to be born. This apocalyptic vision not only led to a dangerous forcing of the pace, but also induced communes in many areas to introduce the system of free supply of grain and other necessities while even where this was felt to be impracticable 'a half-supply half-wage system' was in many cases adopted.

By the end of the year 1958 the authorities were not only worried at the strong peasant opposition to this forcing of the pace, but were also assailed with doubts as to whether their hopes regarding agricultural production would be fulfilled. In December 1958 the Central Committee published a new resolution. It strongly discouraged any idea that true Communism was round the corner. It directed that families in communes should be allowed to eat and live together if they so wished. It ordered the return to the peasants of their homes, personal property and savings; and it discouraged any extension of the free supply system. A few months

later the vast gap between foodgrain production targets and achievements was too obvious to be ignored. The output target for 1958 was reduced from 375 million tons to 250 million tons. In August 1959, just twelve months after the issue of the directive enjoining the formation of communes, the Central Committee issued a new resolution. As in the case of the December 1958 resolution, it damped down false hopes of rapid progress, but it went on to declare that the communes should be supervisors of production rather than the owners of the land and it insisted that the peasants must supply most of their own food instead of relying on the communes.

It is still not clear exactly what this resolution has meant in practice. In many communes the full communal pattern of living appears to have been established and conditions are not favourable for any large scale reversal of it. The communes represent in fact the most stupendous experiment in the collectivization of living yet seen. Russia has been left a long way behind.

To the average Western observer, the picture of a commune in which nobody owns anything significant, in which there is no real family life and in which the peasant has no voice in deciding where he will work or even what kind of work he will do, seems drab indeed. Are there any material advantages to make up for this drabness? There is little doubt that the collectivized peasant is better off than his predecessor in regard to medical services, education and social welfare, but the basic factor on which his wellbeing depends is food production. Has that increased as a result of the introduction of the communes?

Here it is impossible to dogmatize, since the available figures are notoriously unreliable, but the following analysis is probably not far wrong.

Pre-war food grain production in the area now included in China appears to have risen steadily for some years before the War and to have reached a figure of a little more than 160 million tons in the best pre-war year. It naturally fell during the period of chaos, but climbed back to 164 million tons in 1952. The official figures for the years thereafter were as follows:

	million tons
1953	167
1954	170
1955	184
1956	193
1957	185

Between 1952 and 1958 vast new areas were opened out in the North and urban workers were drafted to develop cultivation in the hilly regions. Great drainage and irrigation works were undertaken and in the mood of exaltation which then prevailed, it was officially claimed that agricultural production would be basically free from general drought and flood and would develop with relative stability. In the same spirit of optimism, 375 million tons was fixed as the food grain production target for 1958. These high hopes were soon belied. The target for 1958 had to be lowered to 250 million tons, and the great natural calamities of 1959 and 1960 soon compelled the admission that the earlier claims as to protection against flood and drought were exaggerated. In 1960 it has already been reported that sixty per cent of the cultivated areas were seriously affected by floods or drought. While there is no doubt that these calamities have been widespread, some shrewd observers consider that they are also being used to conceal the growing apathy of cultivators under the communes. There are reports from many areas that members of communes have not received their wages; that their liability to be drafted for any kind of work at the discretion of the cadres has destroyed their interest in their job; that shortages of fertilizers, transport and fodder are serious; and that the local party cadres are proving incapable of providing the necessary leadership. The Ministry of Agriculture is evidently having second thoughts about the full transition to commune ownership, the date for which is now to be fixed after 1965 in the light of circumstances then prevailing.

It is not possible yet to assess the probable result of the establishment of communes. All that can be said is that if we make the improbable assumption that the target of 250 million tons for 1958 was achieved, the results over the ten year period are no more impressive than those achieved in India in the same decade by voluntary methods.

THE SOCIALIZATION OF INDUSTRY*

The socialization of industry was achieved not by any sudden dramatic stroke but by the application of steady, relentless pressure similar to that which had led in the rural areas to the establishment of the communes. At the very outset the Chinese Communists recognized that their aims, as declared in the manifesto of 1922, included 'the abolition of private property and the gradual attainment of the Communist society—and

* This section has drawn freely on *The Economic Development of Communist China*, by Hughes and Luard.

since most large-scale industry was in the hands of foreigners this determination was strengthened by the extreme nationalism which the Communists had so skilfully exploited in the struggle for power. It received further encouragement from the widespread resentment at the stranglehold over the previous government exercised by the leading Chinese business families, particularly the Soongs.

The Communists nevertheless recognized the practical difficulties of combining the expropriation of private enterprise with the industrial development which was their prime need and in his book *The New Democracy*, which was published in 1940 and soon became the accepted statement of doctrine, Mao Tse-tung laid it down clearly that the revolution was to be accomplished in two stages. In the first stage, though State operated enterprises were to constitute the leading forces in the economy, private enterprise was not to be abolished but merely to be kept under control. In 1949 this principle was reaffirmed and it was declared in the Common Programme that the policy was to attain maximum production, 'through taking into account both public and private interests'. The decision not to proceed at once to Communism was justified by the distinction that was drawn between 'bureaucratic capitalists' who were to be suppressed and 'the national bourgeoisie' and Luard shrewdly comments that 'bureaucratic capitalists' seems to have meant those capitalists who disliked or were distrusted by the Communists.

At this time State Trading monopolies in numerous commodities were established and although their primary object was to prevent shortages and profiteering, they also enabled the authorities to exercise control over many private concerns, which could be ruined if they were deprived of contracts with these organizations.

In 1950 the control over private enterprise was put on a more systematic basis. Regulations laid down the conditions under which it could operate and specified how profits must be distributed. The regulations also required private businesses to obtain approval for their plans for production and sale.

In 1951 the government fashioned a more subtle instrument for their purpose. The 'Five Antis Movement' was apparently directed against such malpractices as bribery, tax evasion and the like, but its most important effect was to stir up public feeling against capitalists as a class. Moreover, the very heavy fines imposed on businessmen in the course of this campaign made them completely subservient to authority. In 1952 although it was officially estimated that one-third of all modern industry

in China and two-thirds of all trade were in private hands, it was announced that nationalization of all sectors of the economy was to be completed within three Five Year Plan periods. In the following year this policy was reiterated, with the addition that in the meantime government would put private industry to use and gradually change its character. This meant that those private concerns which continued to exist would do exactly as they were told, while providing capital and know-how which would not otherwise be available—an arrangement often covered by the euphemistic term 'joint venture'. Many businessmen found it impossible to continue to operate under these conditions and were only too glad to be taken over. According to Hughes and Luard, by 1955 private industry only represented sixteen per cent of all industry and moreover eighty-two per cent of the total output of private industry was purchased by the State.

The process went on even more rapidly in 1956 and by the end of the year nearly all private industrial concerns had been converted into government enterprises or joint ventures. The share of profits allotted to the private partner in the joint ventures was gradually whittled down and many of them preferred to abandon their claim rather than be stigmatized as capitalists without any commensurate financial advantage. In 1956 they were told bluntly that they would get nothing after 1962. For all practical purposes it can be said that by the end of 1956 all modern industry had been taken over by the State. Wholesale trade had already been made a State monopoly and it only remained to socialize small-scale industry and small trading concerns. This was taken firmly in hand in 1956. Small industrial establishments, to which government at that time attached much importance, were placed under the control of the communes. A year later it was found that widespread dispersal of industry into small units often resulted in the production of useless goods and attempts were made at greater concentration. By this time, however, the private element had almost disappeared. At the same time small traders and craftsmen were forced to join co-operatives or other industrial groups entirely dependent on the State. Even pedlars were drawn into this vast State network and before long the process of socialization was virtually complete.

It is interesting to note that in China as in Russia the Communists abandoned at an early date the idea that socialization must be accompanied by egalitarianism. The experiment in some rural areas of trying to apply the principle 'to everyone according to his needs' had proved a dismal failure and Mao Tse-tung had no intention of allowing it to operate in urban industries. Many of the former industrialists are today

employed on very satisfactory salaries as managers in the State-owned factories, while amongst the workers wage differentials are wide. As early as 1950 the Communist Minister of Labour declared that under the Kuomintang the differences between the wages of different grades were often too small. 'This', he said, 'resulted in serious egalitarianism and affected the working morale and labour ardour of the workers and staff members.' The same line was adopted in the provisional regulation concerning wages in Central South China, issued in 1952. The piece-work system was to be encouraged, steps were to be taken 'to overcome the serious egalitarianism in wages' and an elaborate system of grades based on the importance of each enterprise and the skill of each individual was devised. All this, of course, was in complete contradiction to the Marxist theory expounded in the Party's earlier manifestos. In other directions too, inequalities were encouraged. Whereas, initially, the output of the average worker was taken as the basis for piece-wage fixation, in 1952 it was laid down that the output of the model worker should be the norm. A little later it was declared that the norm should be continually increased. It is therefore not surprising that in some areas at least the great majority of workers failed to reach the norm.

Pressure to increase production might be salutary in a country where the workers were able to protect themselves by collective bargaining, but there is ample evidence that in China the trade unions are quite unable to fulfil this roll. They have indeed been told again and again that 'the paramount, constant work of trade unions in a People's State . . . is to work for the growth of production'. They are to correct 'the workers' persistent habit of occupying themselves exclusively with their own interest' . . . Again 'the interests of the working classes must be subordinate to the long term and overall interests of the State'. Of those interests, of course, the Communist Party is the sole judge.

It was indeed laid down in 1954 by the Chairman of the all-China Federation of Trade Unions that unions must work under the leadership of the Communist Party and he also quoted with approval Stalin's statement that 'not a single important decision is arrived at by the mass organization for the proletariat, without guiding directions from the party'. It was no doubt for this reason that in 1956 the Chairman, two of the three Vice-Chairmen and all members of the Secretariats of the All-China Federation of Trade Unions were members of the Communist Party.* The Trade Unions are but the instruments through which the

* A good deal of documentation on this and connected subjects will be found in *Mao's China* by Gluckstein.

Communist party controls the workers and gears their energies to greater and greater production.

By 1958, trade, industry and labour organizations had all been put into their appropriate place in the great State machine and it was natural that attention should then be given to the organization of communal living in towns. Experience in the rural communes nevertheless suggested the need of proceeding slowly, and the main task undertaken in 1959 was the provision of the basic services. Communal dining-halls, hair-cutting establishments, nurseries and the like were set up, and small workshops described as 'street factories', were to be serviced on a part-time basis by housewives not wholly employed in industrial production. This preliminary work was in the main completed during 1959 and the stage is now set for the complete establishment of communes.

ECONOMIC PROGRESS

The Communists inherited very little modern industry from their predecessors. After China became free in 1931 to impose tariff protection, there was a good deal of development in the textile and other industries, largely in foreign hands. Ten years of war caused serious dislocation and by 1948 production was at a very low level. In Manchuria the Japanese had established heavy industries on a considerable scale, but the Russians removed all important installations at the end of their occupation in Manchuria. It has been said by a competent authority that when the Communists came into power in 1949, the greater part of the country still carried on an early Iron Age economy.

The new government found itself faced with mounting inflation of so serious a character that barter was everywhere tending to replace monetary transactions. Rigorous price control, supplemented by State monopoly trading in essential commodities, resulted in 1950 in some degree of stabilization of the currency and after a period of stagnation caused partly by foolish interference with the ordinary conduct of business, a revival of industry took place. By 1952, in spite of some setbacks during the Korean war, China appears once again to have reached pre-war levels of production. These levels were, however, very low—considerably below the corresponding levels of Russia before the First World War. In 1952 the Communists set to work seriously to plan economic development. The First Five Year Plan which covered the period 1953 to 1957 began by being little more than a collection of targets for individual industries, but by 1955 it had taken a more definite shape. Emphasis was put almost

entirely on heavy industry and even the development of agriculture was then regarded as primarily designed to produce a surplus from which industry could be financed. Production of consumer goods was given a very secondary place and it was laid down that 'the rate of growth in labour productivity should be greater than the rise in wages in order to ensure accumulation of capital'. In the early stages the plan went astray in several important respects. The planners were inexperienced and the plan was seriously out of balance—industrial projects were planned for which cement and other essentials were not available. There was moreover a strong tendency to concentrate on new developments and neglect such industry as already existed. By 1956 sufficient experience had been gained to correct some of these mistakes and light industries, for example, were now given a more important place in the plan. The results of the modifications now made were satisfactory, but the artificial boosting of development caused serious inflation. The tempo was therefore slowed down. China's claims as to the results of this great effort appear to have been exaggerated, but there is little doubt that the principal targets of the plan were achieved and that by 1957 a considerable step forward had been taken.

Since then the Big Leap Forward has taken place. Unfriendly critics have been apt to write sarcastically of its failures. They have, for example, made much of the uselessness of the steel turned out by cottage industry and they have talked scornfully of the regular lowering of production targets a few months after their establishment. There is, however, nothing at which to scoff in China's economic development. Industrial progress in the last ten years has far exceeded the expectations of the most friendly observers. China has gone a long way towards converting herself into a modern country.

The credit for this does not necessarily go to Communism. International events in the last fifty years have redoubled the impact of the West on China and even in its present anti-Western mood China has in fact been galvanized by the industrial revolution which changed the face of Europe a century ago. The Communists have been the catalytic agent in this process to which they have applied the nascent energy of a revolution.

THE INDIVIDUAL

Very few Englishmen—and the writer is certainly not one of them—know enough about China past and present to express a view as to what

effect the Communist Revolution has had on the life of the individual. From the conflict of reports, mostly biased one way or another, one or two facts and a few guesses nevertheless emerge.

The first reasonable guess is that the urban worker has not yet benefited much from the great industrial development of the last decade. In 1957, in a well-documented study, Gluckstein concluded that real wages were much the same as they were thirty years ago. Other evidence points in the same direction and is reinforced by the frank warning of the authorities that in 1958, 1959 and 1960, China would face three bitter years after which the fruits of present sacrifice would appear. By 1959 the picture looked a little darker and the period of promised bitterness was lengthened to five years. More recently the leading Communist journal stated frankly that until mechanization and electrification were complete, there was no hope for increased production and a rise in the standard of living.

In the meantime, to the Western mind, life in Communist China appears incredibly drab. The blue boiler suits of men and women alike are a poor substitute for the attractive costumes of pre-war Chinese women, even in the poorest classes, and it is difficult to believe that communal mess-halls can satisfy a people to whom family life was all in all, or that town dwellers will continue for ever to enjoy eating, sleeping and playing according to the bell. Modern China has the starkness of Puritanism, without the compensating belief in a future life. Moral earnestness is abundant, but where is the beatific vision—unless seventeen million tons of steel can provide it to minds well disciplined by Communist thought?

Reference to the discipline of thought leads to the reflection that the regimentation of the people in China means something quite different from the corresponding process in Russia. To a great extent the people have become automatons repeating on all occasions of contact with Western peoples the accepted formulae about the brave new world, the bad old days and the glorious leadership of Chairman Mao. They are like robots, but they are not insincere nor are they primarily animated by fear. As a recent writer has put it, they are controlled in every aspect of their life, but they are in communion with the government which controls them. Purging and executions there have been in plenty, but in the main the Communist régime has been based on persuasion rather than on day to day physical compulsion—though that compulsion was always in the background for use if necessary.

This sharp distinction between the Communist régimes in China and

Russia must not obscure the fact that the ordinary man in China has no influence whatsoever on the policy of his government. Even the cadres count for little—and they are perhaps one per cent of the employees in factories. May it be, that with their authoritarian traditions, the Chinese people today do not desire the burden of freedom?

Regimentation by persuasion extends even to the sphere of the intellect. How can the Western mind weigh the remarkable growth of education in Communist China against the fact that China's best writers today are dedicated to an ideology so narrow that to one of them it seems self-evident that Shakespeare's main purpose was to help production by advocating the centralization of power and to expose, as in Hamlet, the neurotic tendencies of royal households?*

There is no end to these contradictions—what for example could be more puzzling than the fact that when freedom in the Western sense scarcely seems to exist, women nevertheless feel infinitely freer than in pre-Communist days?

It is useless to make guesses as to how these contradictions will be resolved. The greatest social, political and economic experiment the world has yet seen is in progress, amongst a people whose historical background is such as to make prediction as to the outcome impossible. The experiment will in the end be judged, not by the performances of Labour Heroes or by the production of steel, but by its effect on the human spirit. So far, the result does not look hopeful.

CHINA AND THE WORLD

The aggressiveness which has characterized Chinese policy since the Communists came to power seems to have arisen from four separate causes. In the first place they had triumphed as a result of their own military powers and had, therefore, a tremendous sense of self-confidence. Secondly, the expansionist spirit which is a normal by-product of a successful revolution was reinforced by the Communist doctrine as to the necessity of war between the Communist and Capitalist countries. Thirdly, imperialism is in the Chinese tradition. Throughout the centuries each new dynasty has sought to extend its domain to the boundaries of the previous empire and in spite of the change in the form of government, Mao Tse-tung is the heir to this tradition. Fourthly, the prolonged attempts of the U.S.A. to support Chiang Kai-shek created deep resentment against the West in the minds of the Communists. This mood was

* See *Mandarin Red* by James Cameron.

in tune with that of Russia, which had just embarked on the Cold War when Mao Tse-tung came to power and it was natural that the two countries should join together in an aggressive alliance against the Western world.

There was, nevertheless, little that China could do against the West, and the only direction in which her expansionist spirit could overflow was in South East Asia. Her intentions were soon indicated by the official maps in which important areas once under Chinese suzerainty were shown as Chinese territory. Her tactics varied from country to country, but their object was clear and they created nervousness throughout the area. In Indonesia the Chinese were content to encourage subversive movements while at the same time undertaking peaceful penetration on such a scale as to alarm Soekarno; in Korea, circumstances made armed intervention very tempting; in Malaya the obvious course was to support local Communist activity. It was, however, in Tibet that the most open manifestation of Chinese communist imperialism occurred.

The relations of that country with China had varied greatly throughout the centuries, and for long periods she had been under Chinese suzerainty. Nevertheless, not even the strongest supporters of China could pretend that Tibet in the second half of the twentieth century had any desire to be linked with China and the invasion of Tibet in 1950 was without even a shadow of justification. It attracted relatively little attention at the time, mainly because Tibet was so completely hidden behind the Himalayan barrier that even her great neighbour, India, knew little of what was taking place. Moreover India at that time was in a determinedly neutralist frame of mind and in her eyes the Communist countries could do no wrong. In 1954, Nehru even went so far as to negotiate a treaty with China, which recognized Chinese suzerainty over Tibet. The Tibetan people were not consulted as to their wishes and the treaty was in flagrant disregard of the principle of self-determination. Ironically enough the preamble to the Treaty laid down the Panch Shila or Five Principles of Coexistence.

Neither Nehru nor the Indian people discovered how completely they had been deceived until the flight of the Dalai Lama to India in 1959 made information available for the first time as to what had been happening in Tibet. A little later the conduct of the Chinese in Tibet was the subject of an inquiry by the International Committee of Jurists. The findings of that Committee were damning in the extreme. In particular they found that the Chinese would not permit the practice of Buddhism in Tibet; that torture and cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment were inflicted

on the Tibetans on a large scale; that the Chinese had set out to destroy Tibetan culture; and that a reasonable standard of living was denied by the use of Tibetan economy to meet the needs of the Chinese settlers in Tibet.

China now began to encroach on the frontier of India and to threaten Bhutan, Sikkim and Nepal. It was clear that China was on the march in Asia, and thinking men were profoundly worried.

For some years the aggressive spirit of China had been in tune with that of Russia, but in due course a divergence appeared. We have already seen how under the Khrushchev régime, Russia, for tactical reasons, moved gradually towards the idea of peaceful coexistence. None of the factors which produced that change in Russia were yet operative in China. Her rulers were not under the necessity of slackening the development of war potential in order to improve the standard of living; nor could they foresee a future in which sheer economic weight would give them the predominance which Communist philosophy compelled them to seek. Russia and China thus soon found themselves at loggerheads. Perhaps the last occasion on which they acted cordially together was in 1958, when China persuaded Russia not to join in a Summit conference on the Middle East.

In 1960, Khrushchev had stated the Russian view thus: 'It should not be forgotten that Lenin's propositions on imperialism were advanced and developed tens of years ago when the world did not know many things that are now decisive for historical development, for the entire international situation. Some of Lenin's propositions on imperialism date back to the period when there was no Soviet Union, when the other socialist countries did not exist . . . one cannot mechanically repeat now on this question what Lenin said many decades ago . . . in quite different historical conditions. If Lenin could rise from his grave he would take such people, as one says, to task and would teach them how one must understand the essence of the matter.' The Chinese on the other hand had declared in *The Red Flag* in April 1960, that 'We believe in the absolute correctness of Lenin's thinking; war is an inevitable outcome of systems of exploitation and the source of modern wars is the imperialist system.'

Thereafter the rift grew rapidly, until at the Moscow Conference of eighty-one Communist Parties in November/December 1960, matters came to a head. The Chinese accused Khrushchev of revisionism and he on his part alleged that Mao Tse-tung was like Stalin, oblivious of the realities of the modern world. The situation was full of drama. The Russian representatives reaffirmed their belief that times had changed

since Lenin declared that war between the Communist and the capitalist world was inevitable and they contended that socialism could now be achieved without violence—though this might even involve giving support to bourgeois parties at times. The Chinese flatly denied the possibility of this approach to world Communism, and stood firm on the Leninist doctrine.

Russia is aware that time is on her side in her struggle for the domination of the world and knows moreover that nuclear war now would be disastrous for her. The Chinese on the other hand display a callous or even frivolous attitude towards this grim possibility, and rely on their vast population to give the capacity to survive.

The dispute is serious, but it is one of tactics rather than of principle. Both countries are committed to the belief that ultimately Communism must destroy capitalism and dominate the world. The only point in issue is as to the timing and the methods by which this result will be achieved.

XI

Communism in India

MANY OBSERVERS have commented on the contrast between the brilliant success of Communism in China and its failure up to now to secure any effective grip on India. That contrast becomes all the more remarkable when regard is had to the conditions which might have been thought to predispose the Indian people to Marxist ideas. The long period of mass struggle against the British Government; the vast gulf between the rich and the poor; the newly awakened sense of the rights of the individual; and the emotional character and susceptibility to propaganda of many of the Indian races—all these factors would seem to render the soil extremely fertile for Communist propaganda. Why is it then that though there are important pockets of Communism, the Government of India and the great mass of the people are strongly anti-Communist in their outlook?

Three possible reasons deserve consideration, the first of which is the incompatibility of Communism with the Hindu outlook on life. The Communists attacked the Hindu citadel with a three-fold weapon, but it broke in their hands. They produced the ideal of a classless society to be met by the still vigorous tradition of caste; they attacked next with the doctrine of economic determinism, to be repelled with the spiritual determinism involved in the Hindu belief in metempsychosis; and they brandished material progress as the sole criterion of value, only to learn that to the most loved and respected of the teachers of India, absorption of the individual in the deity is the ultimate aim. There was in fact no common ground between them and it is only where Hinduism is losing its grip, as amongst a section of the urban intellectuals, that Communism can make much headway. In the villages, amongst the women, and indeed with the vast majority of the middle classes, Hinduism is still a vital force—and against it Communism can do little, though it may be able to ally itself from time to time with local discontent.

A second obstacle to the growth of Communism in India has been the subservience of the Communist Party of India to Moscow, and the repeated misreading by Communist international leaders of the signs of the times in India. For the moment it is enough to say that whereas in China Communism became a mighty power after Mao Tse-tung and his colleagues had discarded the bad advice given to them from Moscow, in

India the party has never so emancipated itself, and has been repeatedly led by Moscow to ignore the main current of Indian thought. It deserted the Nationalist Movement in the critical days before Independence, and has been left high and dry as a result.

A third line of defence has been provided by the tremendous dynamism of the National Plans. The materialistic philosophy of Communism may make no appeal to India, but her people are acutely conscious of their poverty and are determined to end it. They are aware of the progress of Russia and China—indeed they often exaggerate it—and they are young in the ways of democracy. They might well forsake those ways if they fell too far behind in the economic race. Fortunately, the Second Five Year Plan has wrought visible changes. The ordinary man can see that he is better off than ten years ago and the National Plan has captured his imagination. All this makes things more difficult for the Communists.

Before 1919, in India, as in China, Communist thought had made no impact. Revolutionaries indeed there were, particularly in Bengal and the Punjab, but they were solely interested in winning independence and insofar as they had a political philosophy at all, it could best be described as a form of radicalism. Even M. N. Roy, who may justly be called the father of Communism in India, and who was concerned in attempts to secure German arms for Indian revolutionaries during the First World War, showed no serious interest in Communism until in 1919 he met Borodin in Mexico. He was soon converted and shortly thereafter went to the Comintern Congress in Moscow as a delegate from Mexico. There he met a small group of Indians who had foregathered in Berlin during the War in the hope of securing German assistance for an Indian revolution and had now turned to the Communists. With the overweening egoism that characterized him all through his life, M. N. Roy soon fell out with his Indian rivals, but of greater importance was his controversy with Lenin over the correct Communist tactics in a colonial country. Lenin maintained that the 'bourgeois democratic liberation parties' should be supported, while Roy, the typical fanatical convert, saw in them no revolutionary virtue and advocated no dealings with them.

These talks led to the formation of a Central Asian Comintern Bureau in Tashkent, which had become the home of a number of Indian Moslems who had left India in disgust when Britain helped to dismember the Caliphate of Turkey. Neither the Tashkent activities nor the attempt to found Communist parties in countries bordering on India came to much, but about this time Indian nationalists began to be profoundly interested in the Bolshevik Revolution. They were full of admiration for what then

seemed to them the triumph of the Russian people over despotism and they drew from it inspiration in their own struggle for political freedom. Gandhi's civil disobedience movement had awakened political consciousness at the time and educated Indians were in the proper mood at least to receive the Marxist literature which the Communists had begun to send into India.

The mind of a young Indian student, Dange, was fired by Communist ideals and strangely enough he secured the backing of a wealthy Bombay industrialist for the dissemination of Communist literature. Emissaries were sent to India from Moscow, Tashkent and Britain, and though most of them were intercepted and sent back by the extremely efficient British Intelligence Service in India, a few got through and by 1922 five small groups of Communists had been formed in the big cities of India. Roy at this time lived mainly in Berlin, where he published the *Vanguard*, which was regularly smuggled into India in spite of the vigilance of the authorities. In issue after issue of that journal he maintained that the Indian National Congress was moribund, that the Communists should therefore form an opposition bloc in Congress to capture the support of liberal-minded Congressmen, but that they should have no truck with Gandhi or other believers in non-violence. In the economic sphere Roy advocated the abolition of landlords and the nationalization of utilities.

It was natural that Roy, with his Bengal terrorist background, should regard non-violence as meaningless, but it was in keeping with general Communist tactics that in 1923 he advocated two parallel movements. A Workers' and Peasants' Party, strictly legal in character, was to work in alliance with the Nationalists, while a Communist Party, which would be the 'illegal apparatus of the legal mass party', would pursue its own course. This latter party rapidly drew to itself important sections of the Bengal terrorists.

Roy was much disliked in India and had a number of Communist rivals. In 1924 one group of them established a legal Communist Party, which claimed not to be connected with the Comintern. Roy was extremely annoyed at this poaching on his preserves but the new group was of value when the Cawnpore Conspiracy case and the tightening of the censorship, crippled the underground Communist movement.

The Comintern were not happy about the Roy leadership of the Indian Communists, and it was perhaps partly for this reason that in the Fifth Comintern Congress in 1924, they laid it down that the Communist parties in colonial territories must have close links with the parties in the

corresponding metropolitan countries. This resolution in effect gave the Communist Party of Great Britain authority to play a leading part in the affairs of the Communist Party of India. Roy bitterly resented being put in leading strings, but had to submit.

By 1927, thanks largely to the enthusiastic and efficient work of the British Communists, Spratt and Bradley, the Communist Party in India, though small and bedevilled by personal factions, was reasonably well organized. It now began that seesaw between leftist and rightist policy under Moscow control, which was to characterize it for many years. Before we can understand these oscillations it is necessary briefly to glance at the three different Communist strategies in dependent territories described in Kautsky's brilliant book, *Moscow and the Communist Party of India*, as leftist, rightist and Neo-Maoist.

According to the 'left' strategy, capitalism is regarded as the main enemy, and all supporters of that system, whether they be the imperial powers, the feudal landlords or the bourgeois nationalists—essentially 'reformists'—are included in the same condemnation. The correct policy, therefore, is that of the 'United front from below'. Alliances are to be made with the workers, the poor peasants and perhaps even the petty bourgeoisie, but the leaders of the socialist and nationalists parties are to be denigrated on every possible occasion and there can be no question of working with them even in the task of overthrowing foreign imperialism.

When the 'right' strategy is in operation, the main, immediate enemy is not capitalism, but fascism, and in underdeveloped countries, imperialism and feudalism. It is assumed that the revolution will take place in two stages—first the bourgeois democratic revolution against imperialism, and then the proletarian revolution. In the first stage, Communists must follow the policy of the 'United Front from Above'—that is to say they must work in agreement with the leadership of the national party.

The strategy known as 'Neo-Maoist', which was a compromise between the 'left' and the 'right' strategies, came into operation after Mao's seizure of power in China. Against Moscow advice, Mao had broken with the Nationalist leaders in the Kuomintang, but had enlisted the support of people of all classes—workers, peasants, bourgeoisie and even national capitalists. The 'Neo-Maoist' strategy was meant to implement the same principles. As in the 'right' strategy, the revolution was envisaged as taking place in two stages, and in the first stage, the main enemy was not capitalism, but imperialism and feudalism. On the other hand the Neo-Maoists agreed with the leftists that the bourgeois national parties in dependent countries were useless for revolutionary purposes and no truck

must be had with them. As a matter of temporary convenience alliances might be made with the leaders of the socialist parties, but in the main an appeal must be made to all classes—workers, peasants, shopkeepers, professional men and even capitalists—alike against the imperialist enemy and the bourgeois nationalist traitors.

In the first properly organized phase of Indian Communism from 1927 to 1934, the 'leftist' strategy prevailed. Roy had for long advocated this strategy, but by a strange irony of fate, it was only when his personal influence was waning that Moscow, after a long period of hesitation, adopted his views. At the Sixth Comintern Congress in the summer of 1928, it was firmly believed that the period of post-war capitalist prosperity was at an end and that a world-wide socialist revolution was imminent. This clearly called for the strategy of the 'left' in its most extreme form. The Comintern Congress therefore put out the Colonial Thesis which denounced the bourgeois nationalists in India and elsewhere as reformists in whom there was no revolutionary virtue. The Communists were to 'demarcate themselves in the most clear-cut fashion, both organizationally and politically, from all petty bourgeois groups and parties'.

The Comintern differed from Roy, however, in the matter of tactics. It will be remembered that he had set great store by the building up of the Workers' and Peasants' Party, affiliated to the league against imperialism but open and legal in character. By 1928, that party had gained considerable strength, particularly in the Trade Union movement. It succeeded in organizing strikes characterized by violence and as Masani rightly says it was efficiently carrying out the regular Communist policy of disturbing the masses and so preparing them for Communist teaching. Moscow, however, still hypnotized by its own dogmas, would have none of this. 'The Communist Party', said the authors of the Colonial Thesis, 'can never build its organization on the basis of a fusion of two classes'; nor can it organize other groups on this basis. Orders were therefore issued for the disbandment of the Workers' and Peasants' Party and it was declared that the first task of Indian Communists was to unite 'all Communist groups and individual Communists scattered throughout the country into a single, illegal, independent and centralized party'.

This was indeed a blow to the Indian Communists who had pinned their faith largely to the Workers' and Peasants' Party. For a time—encouraged by the Communist Party of Great Britain who disagreed with the Comintern on the question of tactics—the Communist Party of India hedged, but once the orders were categorical they had to be obeyed.

The Communist Party had indeed already been told that 'a Communist party must be an organic part of the world Communist organization. . . .' 'Those who smell dictatorship in this organization principle . . . are not Communists.' By March 1929, the Communist Party of India were preparing to disband the Workers' and Peasants' Party. Before they had done so almost all their leaders were arrested in connection with the Meerut Conspiracy case and for all practical purposes the Workers' and Peasants' Party disintegrated. For the next few years Communism in India was at a low ebb, and by 1934, when the Party was declared illegal, its membership had fallen to a hundred and fifty.

Brief consideration must be given to the question as to why the party which in theory had most to gain from unrest counted for so little in this period of serious dissension and disorder. There appear to have been three main reasons. In the first place the 'left' strategy meant that the Communists had cut themselves off from the main stream of Indian thought. The attention of politically minded Indians at that time was concentrated not on economic theory but on the attainment of independence. The Communists made the fatal mistake of dissociating themselves from this movement. Secondly, the Comintern had made a major tactical blunder in compelling the abandonment of the Workers' and Peasants' Party—an organization which might conceivably have given the Communists a footing in the countryside. A third, perhaps even more potent factor, throughout the whole of the early years of Communism in India, is well within the memory of the present writer. Communist propagandists were quite unable to divest themselves of two obsessions—the disbelief in God and the disapproval of private property. Neither of these ideas made the slightest appeal to the Indian peasant. Religion has always been a vital part of his make-up, and was strengthened by the teachings of Gandhi, whose picture was in every cottage. It is difficult for Western readers to appreciate the tremendous dominance of the Mahatma over the minds of simple Indians. The present writer, who was then in close and affectionate touch with village folks, has no doubt that Gandhi, with his insistence on spiritual values, was the stoutest bulwark against Communism. In fact, the Communists failed at that time because they were controlled by irreligious dogmatists in Moscow who understood nothing of the heart of India.

As we have seen in an earlier chapter, by about 1934 relations between the U.S.S.R. and Germany were becoming strained and the policy of the Comintern began to be governed mainly by the need to build up an anti-Fascist front. For this purpose the help even of the bourgeoisie and

of the Nationalist Reformist parties in dependent territories was needed. The new policy was formally proclaimed at the Seventh Comintern Congress in 1935 and in its relation to India, was crystallized in an article entitled 'The Anti-Imperialist Front in India' written by the British Communists, Dutt and Bradley. The new thesis assumed that there were two wings of the Indian National Congress; the right wing under Gandhi was reactionary and must be fought; but the left wing, in which Jawaharlal Nehru was regarded as the moving spirit, was declared to be a suitable ally. Communists were to join the Indian National Congress as individual members while continuing their own independent activities outside it. 'Both within and without the National Congress the Indian Communists must consolidate all the genuine anti-imperialist forces of the country. . . .' 'All elements . . . who are prepared to break up the co-operation with imperialism and accept the programme of the national struggle are welcome to the Communist front.' The Party was, in fact, to adopt the 'rightist' strategy.

The Congress Socialist Party commended itself as a particularly suitable ally, partly because its ideology was close to that of the Communists, and partly because it still remained both technically and in reality a branch of the Indian National Congress. Membership of the Congress Socialist Party would thus give the Communists automatic entry into the main National Party. The leaders of the Congress Socialist Party had in fact made overtures to the Communist Party of India in 1934 and no obstacles were put in the way of the Communists who joined the Congress Socialist Party in increasing numbers. They rapidly acquired a position out of all proportion to their numbers in that organization. They also aroused hostility by the obvious insincerity of their alliance. In 1937 the Socialist leaders came into possession of a frank statement in which the Communist Party of India declared that the Congress Socialist Party was not a true Socialist party, and was only to be used for propaganda purposes. This led to an open rupture, but it was not until 1940 that the Socialists summoned up the courage to expel the Communists. By that time the Congress Socialist Party in Kerala, Andhra, and Tamilnad was almost entirely under Communist Control. When the Communists were turned out of the Congress Socialist Party, they took the organization in those parties with them. This fact was to be of significance after the War.

Of more permanent importance than the Communist alliance with the Congress Socialist Party was the opportunity it gave them for strengthening their position in the All-India Trade Union Congress. Nowhere was the switch from the left to the right strategy more marked than in this

sphere. The story is amusingly told by a Communist leader and reproduced in Madhu Limaye's booklet on the Communist Party. He describes an occasion when the All-India Trade Union Congress was meeting at Kanpur. The Party had been instructed to expose the All-India Trade Union Congress as reformist and reactionary and P. C. Joshi arrived in Kanpur with a handbill to be used for this purpose. Twenty-five thousand copies were made on the day before the meeting. 'The handbills were brought to Joshi's place. Along with them there was an open packet containing International Press correspondence in which we found a copy of the Open Letter from the Chinese Party to the Indian Party, telling politely that we were following a wrong line, that we were left-sectarian. We looked at each other. What was to be done? We burnt the whole lot of handbills.'

In accordance with the new 'Rightist' policy, the Communists built up strength steadily in the AITUC.

In a sense this might be regarded as their one concrete success during the period. In other fields it could be said that just as the 'left' strategy of 1928–34 had failed because it was out of harmony with the times of India, so the 'right' strategy failed between 1934 and the outbreak of war because of its transparent insincerity. This view, however, is an oversimplification. The strategy had in fact been of value to the Communists in several ways. It enabled them to continue their activities at a time when the Party itself was illegal; it provided them with a respectable platform from which to preach; and their connections with the Congress and Congress Socialist Party gave them opportunities of influencing the thought of Indian intellectuals. They used these opportunities to good effect and although just before the Second World War the Party itself was very weak, a considerable number of young educated Indians had been attracted, if not altogether won over, by the Communist ideology.

The first two years of war clearly demanded a continuance of the 'right' strategy. It was no longer possible to take the anti-Fascist line, but it was not difficult to deflect it into anti-Imperialist and it might have been thought that the Communists would join the Congress in their demand for independence. This indeed was what Moscow expected. The Communist Party of India, however, overplayed its hand. The Indian National Congress at this time acted with moderation: it thought to bargain with Britain for freedom in exchange for support in the War, but it did not as yet lay itself out to hamper the war effort. This moderation angered the Indian Communists, who demanded that India 'should make

revolutionary use of the war crisis'—anticipating by two years the Congress 'Quit India' Movement. Britain was too firmly in control to make revolution practicable, but the Communists did what was possible. They called for a general strike in all major industries, which did not take place, and they organized a very successful strike in the textile industry. At this stage their denunciations of Congress inactivity were cut short by the authorities. Early in 1940 all important Communist leaders were arrested and for all practical purposes the Communist Party of India ceased to operate.

The entry of Russia into the War in 1941 changed the position radically. After a period of bewilderment, Indian Communists accepted the Moscow directive that the imperialist war had become a people's war. They soon did a deal with the British Government of India. The Communist leaders were released, the Party itself ceased in 1942 to be illegal and the Communists embarked on intensive propaganda in support of the war effort. It is generally believed, on good authority, that the Government of India financed the Communist Party in respect of propaganda designed to keep labour steady at a time when industrial production was vital to the war effort. Even M. N. Roy, who had now broken with the official Communist Party of India to found his own Radical Democratic Party, is said to have been subsidized by the authorities for activities in support of the War. His campaign was undoubtedly effective. The present writer knew him well and could not help liking him in spite of his almost incredible egotism. Never was that quality exhibited more clearly than in a Support the War poster designed by M. N. Roy, in which the five leading figures of the world were portrayed—at the corners Chiang Kai-shek, Roosevelt, Churchill and Stalin—and in the centre M. N. Roy.

If these campaigns were in fact financed by government, it was money well spent from the point of view of the authorities. Communist propaganda, often based on advice to labour to defer their claims for improved conditions until after the War, was most effective and certainly had a steadying effect on industry.

It is not necessary to follow in detail the activities of the Communists in India during the War. Only two points need be made. The first is that their insistence on damping down the claims of labour was long remembered against them. The second important point is that they were never forgiven by politically-minded Indians for their denunciation of Gandhi and the Congress at the time of the 'Quit India' Movement in 1942. The fact that sooner or later people came to believe that they had been

subsidized by the British Government may have done them some harm, and indeed cynics say that this was in the minds of the authorities when Communist help was originally enlisted. A more important factor was their isolation from nearly all politically-minded Indians. In 1945 they found themselves devoid of influence. Once again the prospects of Indian Communism had been jeopardized by the need to put Russian interests first.

For the first year or two after the War, while the U.S.S.R. was still co-operating with the Western powers, guidance from Moscow was uncertain and often confused. Left to their own devices, the Indian Communists began by following the 'right' strategy and sought to regain lost ground by co-operation with the Indian Nationalist Congress and the Moslem League. This soon proved impracticable. The left wing, led by Ranadive, gained the upper hand. The Communist Party in India then attacked Congress fiercely and at the same time applied its main energies to fomenting rebellion in Telingana. Strong action by the Government of India soon made them change their tactics and a 'right' strategy, based on support of Nehru and against the alleged reactionary Sardar Vallabhbhbai Patel, was followed until a few months after India attained independence in August 1947.

By 1947 relations between the U.S.S.R. and the West had become seriously strained and from the Communist point of view there was no longer anything to be gained by moderation. The Zdhanov report to the first meeting of the newly formed Cominform marked the adoption once more of an extreme 'left' strategy. That strategy was particularly applicable to India which at that time was regarded by Moscow with hostility, as the alleged tool of the U.S.A. and the U.K. In India itself the times appeared propitious for violent Communist activities. The Punjab massacres just after the Transfer of Power seemed to portend a general breakdown of law and order, while in Hyderabad the struggle over the position of the State in the new India had resulted in complete chaos and serious outbreaks of Communist-inspired violence. The Communist Party of India considered that revolution was imminent and embarked on wholesale war against the State. The Home Minister of the Government of West Bengal, in which State violence was widespread, stated in the spring of 1948 that 'the Communist Party's long-term plan is to wage a ceaseless campaign, open and underground, for the next six months, in preparation for a projected armed rising and a violent seizure of power'. A typical pamphlet issued by the Communist Party of India at this time, urged people to 'attack the murderous Congress Government and tear to

pieces the satanic Ministers. . . . Organize mass upsurge . . . storm the jail gates to snatch the prisoners away.' These incitements produced their intended effect. It is not necessary here to catalogue the resulting horrors. It is sufficient to say that all the evidence supports the official account of events in Hyderabad, where in August and September 1948 two thousand persons were murdered by the Communists, while villages were raided and burned wholesale and children were deliberately thrown into houses which had been set on fire. Party members were carefully trained for these operations, and an interesting extract from the Party manual of training states that 'every day practical exercises in silent killings must be done, one party attacking a Police station and another defending'.

Fortunately for India, Nehru had as his Home Minister a great administrator and a man of infinite toughness. The indomitable will of Sardar Vallabhbhbai Patel imposed strong action on those Provinces whose governments might otherwise have been reluctant to take it. By the middle of 1948, all the principal organizers of Communist violence were either in detention or in hiding, and except in Andhra the movement was crushed. Its failure was not solely due to strong government action. An important factor was the hostility engendered amongst ordinary folk—even those who had Communist leanings—by the ruthless terrorism of the Party. Fellow-travellers fell out rapidly and in most rural areas there was a strong anti-Communist reaction. Perhaps the Communists' most signal failure during this period was in respect of organized labour. The extremists of the Party had split the labour movement in 1946. The All-India Trade Union Congress remained Communist-controlled, while the Indian National Congress formed the Indian National Trade Union Congress and the Socialists established the Hind Mazdoor Sabha. Communist violence in 1948 and 1949 and the obvious way in which the Party put its own interests before those of labour weakened its position even in the All-India Trade Union Congress and attempts to organize strikes on a large scale were, in general, a failure.

The only area in which the Communists achieved any success in this period was in Andhra, where the Party broke away completely from the official line. Its leaders there, following the example of Mao Tse-tung, based themselves on the support of the peasants; they organized campaigns for the non-payment of rent and the repudiation of debt, and in some areas set up what were really parallel governments. If this line had been generally adopted, Communism might have become a formidable danger in India, but the narrow dogmatism of the other Indian Communist

leaders, strengthened by their jealousy of the Andhra Communists, led to a general rejection of the Andhra tactics.

To sum up, by the end of 1949, the violent 'left' strategy had failed. The relatively moderate P. C. Joshi confessed frankly that 'the Party has ceased to function as an organization. . . . Passivity, frustration, demoralization constituted inner party morale.' India was, indeed, solidly behind Nehru and once again the Communists had missed the main current of Indian feeling.

The Communists in India were now in a very unhappy position. Except in Andhra the policy of violence had failed, and the Party itself was torn between contending factions. Joshi continued to urge moderation; Ranadive insisted that a working-class revolution was imminent and that violence must therefore be continued; while the Andhra Communists, under Rajeswar Rao, advocated the building up of a peasant guerrilla force rather than urban uprisings or strikes.

Left to themselves it is probable that the leftists under Ranadive would have had their way, but once again the needs of the U.S.S.R. were the overriding consideration. Russian foreign policy at this time was based on bitter hostility to the U.S.A. This made it necessary to keep the good will of Asia. The quarrel with capitalism as such must take second place to the struggle against the 'imperialists', particularly the U.S.A.

At the Conference of the World Federation of Trade Unions in Peking, in December 1949, the first important announcement of the new line was made by Liu Shao-chi, with evident Moscow approval. The working-class in colonial and semi-colonial countries was to unite with all other classes and parties opposed to 'imperialism', to form a broad united front, while in those countries where it was possible, a People's Liberation Army, led by the Communist Party, was to be trained.

Ranadive and his colleagues either did not, or would not, understand the new line until Joshi appealed to Moscow for definite guidance. It was forthcoming in a Cominform editorial in January 1950 in which the Neo-Maoist policy enunciated by Liu Shao-chi was authoritatively approved. The article went on to specify the countries where the time was ripe for an armed struggle as Vietnam, South Korea, Malaya, the Philippines, Indonesia and Burma. India, which Moscow insisted on regarding as not yet wholly independent of Britain, was not in the list. The Indian Communists were particularly directed, 'drawing on the experience of the national Liberation movement in China and other countries, to strengthen the alliance of the working-class with all the peasantry, to fight for the introduction of the urgently needed agrarian reform and—on the basis of

the common struggle for freedom and national independence of their country, against the Anglo-American imperialists oppressing it and against the reactionary bourgeoisie and feudal princes collaborating with them—to unite all classes, parties, groups and organizations willing to defend the national independence and freedom of India'. It is not easy to understand how the Cominform managed to persuade itself that the people of India were not yet really free after two years of self-government.

After such a firm directive, the Communist Party of India could no longer argue. The usual Communist technique of self-abasement was used and the Politburo issued a statement that 'the tradition of our party . . . has been to swing like a pendulum from one extreme to another . . . we woke up suddenly like Rip Van Winkle at the end of 1947 to jump into left sectarianism which has brought the Party and the mass movement to the present plight of total disruption'. A little later it was stated more explicitly that though violence would no doubt have to be used in the end, the time for that was not yet ripe. 'The present paramount task', said Palme Dutt in an open letter to the Indian Communists, 'is the initial mobilization of mass support and activity on the most elementary issues . . . the building of the peace movement . . . the broad democratic front.'

By 1951 the new strategy, which may be summarized as involving peaceful methods for the time being, with violence as a secret and distant aim, was fully accepted in India, though what has been described as their 'inherent left sectarianism' often impelled the local Party members to emphasize the long-term goal and to conduct small-scale experiments in this direction.

The Peace campaign, which the Communists conducted in many countries as a means of confusing the minds of the ordinary man, had in India the special object of transforming neutralism into support for the Communist countries. Indian feeling at this time was much in sympathy with Russia and China, and suspicion of the U.S.A. was widespread. The belief in neutralism was, nevertheless, deep-seated and the Communists found it necessary to operate in this field from behind cover. At the Bombay Peace Conference in 1951, with 'India Can Halt War' as its central theme, known Communists took no open part.

The All-India elections of 1951–2 provided the Communist Party of India with an admirable opportunity of implementing the new strategy. They formed a united front with left-wing groups throughout India, though they would have nothing to do with the official Socialist party which they described as 'the biggest hindrance to the formation of the

united front against imperialism'. This policy of the United Front was reinforced by the well-known Communist technique of exploiting sectional grievances and the one most readily to hand was the demand of important sections of the population for the revision of the boundaries of the provinces in such a way that they would coincide with linguistic frontiers. This demand was particularly strong in Andhra where the Telegus resented being included in the majority Tamil province of Madras. Andhra for the Telegus became the election slogan of the Communist Party in that area. They strengthened their position also by a well organized scheme of welfare work. The rights of widows were protected, orphans were cared for and the poor man was made to feel that the Communists were his friends. What then could be more natural than that they should uphold the demands of the Telegus for a province of their own? Feelings ran high and Nehru, who at that time was strongly opposed to the principle of linguistic States, met with an extremely hostile reception on his election tour. In the event, the Communists swept the poll in Andhra, so much so that before long the demand for Andhra State was reluctantly conceded by the Government of India.

The Communists' only other marked successes were in Hyderabad—where the strong action necessarily taken by the Government of India in suppressing disorder had created much resentment—and in Travancore-Cochin. Elsewhere in India the Communists met with little success, though they and their allies were able to form a respectable bloc of twenty-three members and thus to be the principle opposition in the Lower House of the Indian Parliament.

The United Front soon broke down and the statement of the Communist members in Parliament that they were determined to wreck the Constitution revealed a contempt for Parliament which was much resented. Nevertheless, the high calibre of a number of the Communist representatives was undeniable and they were often helped by the fact that, whenever Nehru found it necessary to criticize them, he apologetically referred to their noble ideals. The Communists themselves were much divided on such questions as to whether Britain or U.S.A. should be regarded as the greater enemy and as to whether Nehru should be looked on as a friend or as an enemy. Nevertheless, by a skilful espousal of such popular causes as the abolition of landlordism, the formation of linguistic states and the discontinuance of preventive detention, they succeeded in building up a fair amount of sympathy, if not support, amongst educated Indians. In general, however, that sympathy did not go to the extent of leading people to break with the Congress and it was interesting to note

that when elections were held in February 1955 in the newly formed State of Andhra the Communists met with a shattering defeat. They had thought in 1952 that they were exploiting the Telegu demand for Andhra State, but the 1955 results suggested that in reality the Telegus had exploited them.

No spectacular change in Communist strategy has taken place in recent years and indeed the general Russian policy of friendship towards Nehru's India, would preclude any overt revolutionary activity. The main characteristics of Communist activity during this period have been unostentatious support from abroad and the concentration of resources on special areas or in particular fields.

Indian Communists no longer proclaim openly their devotion to Russia, though fondness for China could, until the last year or so, be declared safely enough. They have, however, been helped by the vast quantity of Communist literature poured into India. For some years, the present writer called repeated attention to the fact that every hole-in-the-wall bookshop in India was full of two kinds of books—pornography and Communism. For a time, the Government of India took the high moral tone and declared that its belief in freedom of speech prevented it from interfering with the free flow of ideas, but after a while this attitude was modified, at least to the extent that avowed Communist literature was banned from railway bookstalls. Possibly other restrictive measures have also been taken without publicity, for it is no longer possible to buy in any bookshop the beautifully bound works of Karl Marx for a few rupees, as was the case some years ago. The mechanics of the distribution of Communist literature and the methods by which it was financed have never been revealed, though they are no doubt known to the Government of India, which inherited from the British a first-class intelligence system and has still further improved it. It seems clear that booksellers—if that is not too highfalutin a term for the proprietors of some of the nooks and crannies in which books are sold—were at one time supplied with Communist literature free or at greatly reduced rates. The profit motive, so condemned by Marxism, must have helped considerably in the dissemination of these books.

Before long, however, the Cominform discovered a more subtle weapon. Books for children, translations of the English classics, cultural works with no obvious propaganda bias, but emanating from Russian sources, began to appear. The U.S.S.R. was to be the benevolent uncle from whom the good things of the intellectual life could be obtained—and until recently Britain and the U.S.A. lagged far behind. Culture in

all its aspects was enlisted in the cause of international Communism and the India-Soviet Culture Society provided a happy background for Communists, fellow-travellers and innocents. Highbrow films, artistic delegations and peace gatherings all tended to the same purpose. Students were an easy prey and the widespread and alarming decline of discipline in some Indian universities is undoubtedly due in part to Communist influence.

Two areas which received special attention from the Communists in this period were Calcutta and the State of Travancore-Cochin. Calcutta requires little discussion. The Bengali, for whom the writer has a special affection, is emotional and volatile and the same qualities which made him a natural terrorist in the thirties, commend him to the Communists today. The terrifying problems of middle class unemployment and the refugees have created deep-seated discontent, of which the Communists can make use. In rural West Bengal on the other hand the Congress still have a strong hold and most competent observers believe that at the next election, while the Communists may capture most of the seats in the industrial areas round Calcutta, West Bengal as a whole will continue to support the Congress.

Travancore-Cochin is of particular interest in our story. As the writer has stated elsewhere* 'a progressive education policy followed for a long time in the State of Travancore has produced a large middle class for whom no suitable employment is available. Sir C. P. Ramaswami Ayer, the well-known Dewan of Travancore, used to boast that in his State the bus drivers were graduates. Unfortunately, this also meant that graduates had to be bus drivers and discontent was the inevitable result.' These conditions enabled the Congress Socialist Party to establish a strong hold in Travancore in the thirties. When the Communists were invited into the Congress Socialist Party from 1937 onwards, they soon captured it in this area and on their expulsion some years later, took the Party machine with them.

In 1949 the two states of Travancore and Cochin were united and apart from the factor just described, the new State had another special attraction for the Communists. It was an area of great communal tension. Racial hostilities between Tamils and Malayalis, and religious antagonism between the Hindus and the Christians, who were numerous in some districts, were only too obvious a feature of Travancore. Nobody knew better than the Communists how to exploit such divisions.

When the general elections took place in 1951–2 the Communist Party

* *Modern India.*

was under ban in Travancore-Cochin. It therefore linked itself with several left-wing groups and its candidates stood as Independents. The associated group secured nearly one-third of the seats in the State Assembly. The Congress Party was able to form a Government but it soon fell into disrepute. It was considered to fall far below the standard of other Congress Governments as regards diligence, honesty and public spirit. It failed to maintain order or to take in hand long overdue educational reform or to achieve any substantial material progress. When, therefore, the Communist Party diverted to Kerala the resources which it had been deploying in Andhra before the creation of a separate Andhra State, it found its task comparatively easy.

In the election struggle in 1957, the Congress Socialist Party played an equivocal part, while so great was the unpopularity of the Congress that even many Catholics, who might have been expected to oppose the Communists, remained neutral. The fact that the traditionally troublesome district of Malabar had been incorporated into Travancore–Cochin, to form the new State of Kerala had created a new focus of discontent, and so assisted the Communists. They won sixty out of a hundred and twenty-seven seats and as five Independents joined them, they were able to form the first Communist Government in the Commonwealth.

Individually, the new Ministers were considered to be an improvement on their predecessors. They worked harder, their standards of integrity were high and they were clearly devoted to the public service. They were, however, genuine Communists and their determination to impose the Marxist pattern on society was immediately evident. The Ministers began with a deep suspicion of the police—perhaps because they themselves had been roughly handled in earlier days. They refused to distinguish between breaking a strike and taking action against violent strikers. They made it impossible for the police to protect employers against violence, and they encouraged the Communist Unions to coerce and intimidate members of non-Communist Unions. A sense of insecurity became widespread, particularly in the Tea districts and on the West Coast, where planters, factory managers and their wives lived under a constant apprehension of danger.

Influential Hindus in other parts of India began to demand intervention by the Central Government and there are some grounds for believing that for a time the Cabinet itself was divided on this issue. The Kerala Government took the hint. It issued a new directive to the police and began to behave with great propriety. It nevertheless embarked on a wholesale campaign of Communist indoctrination, supported by all the

resources of the State. Village welfare workers were recruited on a large scale from the Communist Party; schools, including those run by Christian missionaries were brought under State control and the capitalist was quickly made to feel that he was not wanted. Dissatisfaction grew rapidly and in May 1959 made itself manifest in the decision of the governing bodies of seven thousand schools that, as a protest against the Kerala Education Act, they would not reopen. The State Congress Party organized an intense agitation to compel the Communists to resign and were supported in this by the Congress Party throughout India. Violence soon broke out and the drastic measures understandably taken by the Communist Government to repress it, stirred up further resentment and disorder. Chaos was imminent when, in August 1959, the Central Government superseded the Kerala Government and set up Governor's rule. Nehru declared firmly that the Communist Party was not a national party like other parties.

Governor's rule continued until February 1960 when fresh elections were held. The Communists polled more votes than in 1947, but were defeated by the combination of Congress, Praja Socialists and Moslem League. There are many signs of lack of cohesion in that coalition, and prediction as to its future would be rash.

The most important point, perhaps, is that in spite of their deliberate concentration on Kerala and of the favourable circumstances there, the Communists only came into power in that State because of the inability or unwillingness of the Congress and associate parties to undertake necessary reforms and to work together. There is little comfort to be gained from this in view of the close parallel it affords to the behaviour of Chiang Kai-shek in China. More satisfaction is to be drawn from the rapid reaction of the Kerala public against the Communists, the readiness of the Central Government to intervene at the appropriate time and the profound relief of the middle classes throughout India when the Communist Government was removed.

Perhaps of more permanent significance than events in Kerala has been the rapid progress of the Communists amongst organized labour. As we have seen, in 1946 the Indian labour movement split into three main organizations: the All-India Trade Union Congress closely connected with the Communist Party of India; the Indian National Trade Union Congress affiliated to the Indian National Congress; and the Hindu Mazdoor Sabha with Socialist links. Unfortunately, the Indian National Congress has failed to live up to its responsibilities in this sphere. Its unions are on the whole badly organized. They lack able and disinterested

leadership and they are ill disciplined. Communist unions on the other hand have won the reluctant admiration of many employers by their efficiency, their reasonableness in bargaining and their ability to implement any settlements made. They are believed to be working to a carefully-worked-out directive which lays down three principles. Government must not be antagonized; the confidence of employers must be won and a reputation for reasonableness gained; and attention must be concentrated mainly on the modern, highly technical industries on which India's future depends. The older industries can be dealt with later. The Party has not always been able to exercise the self-restraint involved in this policy, but in general the plan has been followed fairly closely, and it has paid dividends. Communist unions are well established in some important industries and their membership appears to be growing more rapidly than that of the Congress unions. It is believed to have reached a figure of more than six hundred thousand by 1959. Probably only a small proportion of members are in any sense Communist, but in many countries the Communists have shown themselves able to use bodies of followers who are not Party members.

The growth of Communist influence amongst labour has been more than offset by the strong, general reaction against Communism, resulting from recent Chinese aggression in Tibet and on India's northern frontier. This has damaged the Indian Communists in two ways. In the first place, they have been unable to agree amongst themselves as to the attitude to be taken towards these events. One group has adopted a thoroughly nationalist line and condemned China outright, while another section has thought to defend or at any rate minimize the importance of the Chinese actions. While the Communists have been divided, the general public has been roused to anger. Affection for the Chinese has been dramatically changed to distrust and fear and—what is more relevant to our purpose—attention has been forcibly directed to the danger which could arise from the existence in India of a political party which takes its directions from abroad. All observers agree that the Communists have, at least for the time being, suffered a serious setback.

To sum up, the high hopes of India once entertained by international Communists have not been fulfilled. Advice from Moscow led the Communist Party of India to isolate itself from the main current of Indian thought; the policy of violence adopted under foreign direction, was resented even by fellow-travellers; and more recently the identification of Communism with an aggressive China has created fresh difficulties.

Speculation as to the future would be unprofitable. Some gloomy

prophets predict that a rapid decline in the hold of Hinduism on the masses, will leave a vacuum which Communism will fill; while others fear that India will fall behind in the economic race with China, and that Communism may then appear attractive to the Indian people. The present writer shares neither of these apprehensions, but all that can be said with certainty is that the conditions for a successful Communist revolution do not exist in India today.

XII

Communism in South East Asia

IT HAS been truly said that in Asian countries socialism is an essential ingredient of nationalism. Subject peoples, awakening to a new sense of their rights, were naturally attracted by Marx's description of colonialism as 'undisguised looting, enslavement and murder' and were only too ready to suspect capitalism since overseas empires were its vigorous offspring. Their own rich men had not applied their wealth to the development of modern industry and had in general continued to be traders or moneylenders. Modern capitalism was thus identified with the foreigner, whose rule Asians were passionately determined to overthrow. Moreover, in the struggle for freedom they enjoyed the sympathy of the left-wing parties in Europe and were thus receptive to radical ideas.

One other factor operated in the same direction. It was clear that they could only escape from their own poverty by large-scale industrialization and yet they were acutely conscious of the evils which had accompanied the industrial revolution, under the capitalist system, in Europe. It seemed to follow that the State, rather than private enterprise, must be the focal point of their economic development.

It is true that the great mass of the people of South East Asia had not awakened to these ideas, but the handful of Western-educated individuals who were to shape national thought and feeling, were clearly pre-conditioned to some form of socialism and it so happened that at the critical time the most dynamic form of socialism was Communism.

It will be sufficient for our purpose to illustrate these generalizations by reference to the three countries of Indonesia, Burma and Malaya, in each of which different sets of circumstances appeared to favour the growth of Marxist ideas.

INDONESIA

Nowhere was this pre-conditioning to socialism more evident than in Indonesia. The Dutch in that country had been less responsive than the British in India to rapidly growing nationalist feeling and in spite of the 'ethical policy' adopted by Holland early in the twentieth century Western-educated Indonesians found no outlet for their activities. Nearly all important posts in the administration continued to be held by the

Dutch; big business was mainly in European hands; and even trade was dominated by the Chinese and Indians who had proved themselves more enterprising than the people of the country. Credit has not always been given to Holland for the educational facilities made available in the decade or so before the First World War—but they merely added to the number of the restless and the discontented.

Other unsettling forces were also at work. The growth of a money economy had broken down the old village community life; the modernist Islamic Movement, the impulse to which came from Cairo, had loosened the formerly rigid bonds of Moslem society and introduced new ideas of social justice; while agrarian unrest had affected many villagers, some of whom were also half conscious of the stirrings of nationalism.

It is easy now to see that nationalism and Marxism in Indonesia were closely intertwined and that the crucial question was whether the socialist or the Communist version of Marxism would prevail.

One of the earliest expressions of the new mood sprang from both political and economic causes. In 1909 the Sarekat Islam, or Islamic Association, was formed to protect Indonesian traders against the rapid inroads of the Chinese. It soon widened its activities and by 1917 it had put in the forefront of its programme, first, nationalism and then that vague anti-capitalism which was current in various parts of the Islamic world at that time.

In the meantime, in 1914, a group of Marxist Dutchmen had founded the Indies Social Democratic Association with the support of Indonesians who had previously belonged to a recently suppressed Independence Party. The Indies Social Democratic Association started to publish journals devoted to nationalism and at the same time carried on effective propaganda amongst the newly formed trade unions. The leader of the Association, Sneevliet, soon realized that anti-European feeling was so strong as to make direct mass propaganda impossible and he therefore decided to penetrate the Sarekat Islam. This did not at first appear difficult as there was little difference between the economic theories of the Sarekat and Marxism. Trouble, however, soon arose since the Sarekat Islam attached great importance to the Islamic faith and were antagonized by Marxist hostility to religion. This conflict was to recur throughout the following decades, and though from time to time the Indies Social Democratic Association and its successors adopted a more tolerant attitude, the cleavage was fundamental. The clash became more serious from 1919 when the Dutch at last inaugurated a legislature with limited powers In 1920 the Indies Social Democratic Association converted itself into the

Communist Party of the Indies (PKI) and became affiliated to the Comintern. It then made systematic attempts to capture branches of the Sarekat and form them into People's Associations but was seriously handicapped by the decision of the Second Comintern Conference that though liberal movements should be supported reactionary and feudal religious tendencies must be controlled. The peasants left many of the branches when they were threatened and established Green non-Communist organizations of their own.

In 1924 the PKI—following the textbook dogma and not understanding the later modifications of it—abandoned the People's Association and concentrated on labour. They also failed to pay attention to Moscow's directive regarding a United Front or to make any kind of link with the non-Communist Nationalist parties. Moscow was at this time too heavily engaged elsewhere to bother about Indonesia and either the instructions given were not sufficiently explicit or no attempt was made to follow them up.

At this time there was controversy in the PKI as to the desirability or otherwise of an armed rising. Two leaders who had just returned from Moscow appear to have supported this idea, while Tan Malaka, the shrewdest of all Indonesian Communists, opposed it on the ground that there would be no mass support and that the Communists themselves were not yet properly trained for it. In theory, the Party cadres were given a course of instruction, but in practice anxiety to outbid the Sarekat Islam in numbers led to indiscriminate recruitment and abandonment of training.

Tan Malaka was right on both counts. Insurrections were organized by the PKI in both Java and Sumatra in 1926, but they were badly planned and the government crushed them ruthlessly. It is clear that most of those who took part were not Communists, but Nationalists, or peasants with a grievance. This premature rising gave the whole movement a serious setback. It could not continue a legal existence and it was not until the Second World War that the Party was able to make an open return.

The Communists had failed in this first phase for two main reasons. In the first place there were few trained local leaders and anti-Western feeling limited the effectiveness of Dutch Communists. Secondly, Moscow paid insufficient attention to Indonesian conditions and did not recognize that is main instructions—to support national liberal movement, but to oppose 'reactionary religions'—were incompatible. Much of the real strength of the Nationalist movement resided in the Sarekat

Islam, the members of which would not co-operate with the enemies of their faith.

There is little reliable evidence as to the underground activities of the PKI during the next fifteen years, though its members seem to have infiltrated successfully into other organizations. The main characteristic of the period from 1926 to the outbreak of war, was the growth of other Marxist or neo-Marxist parties, in which Indonesian students, in Holland as well as in Indonesia, were prominent. They were all nationalists and nearly all socialists. The Indonesian Students' Association, of which Mohammed Hatta became the leader, could almost have been regarded as 'fellow-travellers' until the new 'left strategy' imposed by the Comintern made their position in the League against Imperialism almost impossible.

In 1927 Soekarno, a young engineer, whose personality was to dominate Indonesia in the post-Independence period, founded the Indonesia Nationalist Party (NPI) on the basis of nationalism and anti-capitalism. It has been justly observed by a shrewd commentator that Soekarno was the perfect synthesis of East and West and admirably suited, therefore, to command the loyalty of young men 'imbued with a mixture of ideas derived from Western Socialism, Communism and Nationalism'. The NPI gained influence rapidly until in 1933 Soekarno and the other leaders of the party were exiled. In the meantime it had done much to strengthen the Marxist flavour of Indonesian political thought.

The war period need not occupy much of our attention, since the Communists completely missed the opportunity to rebuild their position. It has been suggested that they were hampered by the contradictions in Moscow policy. Every effort must be made, they were told, to beat the Japanese and yet at this time it suited the U.S.S.R. to bolster up the idea that the Dutch Government in Indonesia would be restored. This ambivalence necessarily stultified Communist activities.

The Japanese soon became very unpopular, but it was necessary to hedge and it was agreed by the Nationalist leaders that Sjahir should organize a resistance movement while Soekarno and Hatta should collaborate with the Japanese in preparation for the independence which it was believed the Japanese would be forced to grant. Another Moslem leader, Sjarifuddin, also organized a Communist resistance group. There were in fact four resistance groups and there is some ground for thinking that the Communist group was the least successful of the four.

Be this as it may, the Communists did not strengthen their position during the War and at the end of it they contributed nothing to the

establishment of the Republican Government in 1945. The credit for that achievement must go to Soekarno, the non-Communist Marxist.

It is fortunate for our readers' sanity that it is not necessary to follow the kaleidoscopic shift in political alignments after the establishment of the Republic. Soekarno was the fixed point round which others revolved. In general it can be said that the Indonesian Nationalist Party and the Masjumi, or main Moslem Party, formed the principal elements in the government, while the Communists (PKI), the National Communists under Tan Malaka (afterwards known as the People's Revolutionary Party), and the very orthodox Moslems tended to be the Opposition. The two Communist factions agreed over all matters internal to Indonesia, but were divided by personal jealousies and by the refusal of Tan Malaka to have ties with Moscow. Here, indeed, was a new Asian phenomenon —a Communist who would not acknowledge the authority of the U.S.S.R.

Already weakened by these divisions, the Communists did yet further damage to their cause in 1948 by an ill-considered rising, which was easily put down and was followed by repression of such a character that Communists called it the White Terror. Sjarifuddin and other leaders were executed and the Party was reduced to such a state of chaos that it could play no effective part in the final, successful, struggle for independence in 1949.

Circumstances in the early days of the Indonesian Union were nevertheless favourable to the growth of Communism. The Army was divided into political factions without any real central control. The main labour union, SOBSI, was affiliated to the World Federation of Trade Unions. Corruption and smuggling were rife while exchange control was the subject of political juggling; economic progress was negligible; guerrilla bands roamed the countryside; and none of the ever-changing political parties showed any signs of stability or good organization. Moreover, Soekarno, who now stood outside all parties, was by nature a man of compromise and was prepared to work with the PKI as readily as with the Nationalist Party.

The Communists, in contrast with their earlier bungling, exploited these favourable circumstances with skill. By supporting the Sastromidjojo Government in 1953 they gained an entry once again into the villages and soon occupied a prominent position in the Peasants' Movement. At the same time, by identifying themselves with labour grievances, they built up a strong position in SOBSI. Their relative friendliness with Soekarno also stood them in good stead with many of the civil servants.

In all these activities they were helped by the great access of prestige to the Communist Party as a result of Mao Tse-tung's triumph in China. Practical help, too, was soon forthcoming from that quarter. Propaganda material, specially written for Indonesia, soon poured into the country from China on a considerable scale and for the first time the Indonesian Communists had the support of outsiders who understood the Indonesian background.

In spite of the difficult problems of the overseas Chinese, relations between Indonesia and China appeared outwardly to be cordial and every cultural mission or trade delegation or other occasion when hospitality was lavished by China on an Indonesian visitor helped the common cause.

The growth of Communist strength naturally added to the political chaos. Stability in non-Communist parties or alliances between them seemed to be beyond attainment, and in December 1956 in despair of stability under the ordinary Party system, Soekarno proposed to appoint an all-party National Council which would naturally include the Communists. In such a Council the traditional Indonesian fondness for compromise could be displayed; nobody need bother about the fine line between left-wing Marxist Socialism and Communism; and stability might be restored. Neutralism would, of course, be the foreign policy of the Ministry of All the Talents. The Communists were receptive to this idea, but it did not greatly attract the Masjumi or the non-Communist elements in the Nationalist Party and in December 1956, before it could be implemented, a military revolt broke out in Sumatra. This was soon followed by similar outbreaks in other parts of the Union. Soekarno reacted promptly with the declaration that Western democracy was not working in Indonesia. A state of siege was proclaimed and in April 1957 Soekarno formed an 'extra-parliamentary Cabinet of experts'.

The subsequent events belong, not to the study of Communism, but to the history of Indonesia and we need not deal with them. The cracks in the façade of Indonesian unity have become obvious and everywhere Communists and non-Communists alike are trying to exploit the resulting discord. It is impossible at this point of time to assess the extent of Communist influence in the turmoil. Conflicting tendencies are at work. On the one hand Marxist influence has penetrated practically all Indonesian parties and the struggle between Socialists and Communists is by no means decided. Nobody indeed is very anxious to define the difference, since this might involve a departure from international neutralism.

On the other hand two factors may compel a more definite alignment. One is a growing recognition of the ruthless, totalitarian character of

Communism and the other—made apparent in recent months by restrictions on foreign trade aimed largely at the Chinese—is Indonesian fear of China. No official personage would admit that fear in public, but it is all-pervading and will perhaps tell against the Communists in the long run.

BURMA

For centuries before the British period the Burmese had been conscious of their unity. The Karens and other hill peoples remained apart, but they were a small minority. Ninety per cent of the population spoke Burmese and were closely bound together by the Buddhist faith. In spite, therefore, of the material advantages that flowed from the final British conquest in 1886, it was not long before resentment of foreign rule made itself felt. That feeling was strengthened by three factors. In the first place, under British rule, Indians, by nature more enterprising than the people of Burma, were able to secure a predominant position in local trade. Secondly, although the Indian Civil Service was in theory open to the people of Burma,* it was not until 1923 that a Burmese candidate succeeded in entering it. Thirdly, modern industry was established by the British who not unnaturally employed their own nationals in all superior posts. There were thus no openings in administration, commerce or industry for a growing class of Western-educated Burmese.

The nationalist movement did not develop quite as quickly as might have been expected, but in 1918 it received a fillip from an unexpected quarter. The Montagu-Chelmsford Committee, appointed to consider the next stage of constitutional advance in India, decided not to visit Burma on the ground that the desire for elective institutions had not developed in that country. The Burmese are a proud people and the intelligentsia were stung to the quick by this slight. There was an immediate intensification of nationalist feeling and in 1923, after two or three years marked by widespread unrest the British Government included Burma in the general scheme of Indian dyarchy under which non-officials gained a considerable degree of legislative authority and some share in the executive government.

This did not long satisfy the intelligentsia. Nevertheless the serious Saya Sen revolt in 1930 was not inspired by the political leaders, but was essentially a peasant movement. It has been justly described by Tinker as 'a mediaeval outburst against the modern world, with Saya Sen the leader crowned as king and his five queens, his followers tattooed and

* Burma was part of India until 1935.

provided with amulets to make them invincible and invulnerable as they swept forward to be mown down by machine-gun bullets'.

Of more lasting effect was the foundation at about this time of the Dobama Asi Ayon or 'We Burmans Association' whose members were known as Thakins,* in token of their claim that they and not the British were now the masters of Burma. Perhaps the most influential member was U Nu, later to become the first Prime Minister of Independent Burma.

The primary aim of the Dobama Asi Ayon was independence and they carried on propaganda amongst students, workers and peasants in support of that object. The propaganda soon took on an anti-capitalist tinge. English education had familiarized many of the students with Western radical thought and it is significant that a bequest from Saya Sen was used to establish a library which included *Das Kapital* and other books on various aspects of left-wing thought.

The Communist world had not yet paid attention to Burma. The Indian Communist Party was fully occupied with its own struggles; and neither Moscow, the Communist Party of Great Britain, nor the Communist Far Eastern Bureau thought it worthwhile to tackle Burma until Communism had been established on a firmer footing in India. It was not until 1936 that the first contacts between Burma and Communism were established through the agency of a Burmese journalist, who went to Calcutta University and shortly thereafter joined the party. Other students returned from England about the same time with communistic ideas, and Left Book Club literature began to be available in Rangoon. Progress amongst the intellectuals was slow but steady and by 1939 it was possible to found the Burmese Communist Party. It was in a sense a group within the Dobama Asi Ayon and its first Secretary-General was Aung San who also held a similar position in the Asi Ayon.

The Party at once found itself in difficulties. Most members of the Dobama Asi Ayon, including Aung San, were anxious to seek the help of Japan in obtaining independence and in 1939 the Freedom Bloc was formed with this object largely in view. This was in flat contradiction of the Comintern and anti-Japanese policy. Aung San ignored the fears of the Comintern and himself became Secretary-General of the Freedom Bloc without leaving his post in the Burmese Communist Party.

While plans for obtaining Japanese help were ripening, much was done on the home front. Students were brought up to a proper mood of defiance of authority, but of greater importance was the steady infiltration into labour either by Communists, or by men like Ba Swe, who described

* Thakin is equivalent to Sahib.

himself as a Marxist but not a Stalinist Communist. In January 1940 an All-Burma Trade Union Congress was formed and apart from better conditions for labour, its aims included the nationalization of the means of production and distribution. By means of their hold over labour, exercised mainly through Ba Swe, the Nationalists were able to put considerable difficulty in the way of the Allied war effort. In 1940 their attempts to stage another strike in the oilfields led to the arrest of many of the leaders, but Aung San managed to escape to China.

It has been stated that the National Revolution Party—an amalgam of many groups for the purpose of securing independence—planned before the War to raise an army of Burmese residents in Siam who would be armed and trained by the Japanese for an invasion of Burma. What is more certain is that after the Japanese entry into the War, Aung San visited Burma to recruit the Thirty Comrades who were subsequently trained in Formosa under his generalship. They returned to Burma with the Japanese in January 1942, to form the Burma Independence Army.

Many of the Burmese Communists were bitterly opposed to collaboration with Japan and regarded Aung San as a renegade. At an early stage, Thakin Soe, at that time the leader of the Communists, organized the resistance movement and established contact with Allied Headquarters in India. Thus in Burma, as in India, the Communists at this period found themselves at variance with the main lines of national thought. Gradually, however, the Japanese became unpopular amongst the educated classes, though not so much so amongst the peasants. The nominal independence which they conferred was seen to be a mockery and their racial arrogance far exceeded that of the worst Europeans. This, together with their brutality, aroused deep hostility. One practical result nevertheless accrued from the show of independence which the Japanese thought it necessary to stage. Burmese leaders, including U Nu and Aung San, stepped into high governmental posts and acquired valuable experience for the future.

In course of time even Aung San turned away from the Japanese and joined in the resistance movement, though still remaining as Commander-in-Chief of the Burmese Defence Army under nominal Japanese control. In 1944 the various resistance groups coalesced, at least nominally, into the Anti-Fascist People's Freedom League, of which the main elements were (*a*) Aung San and his army, (*b*) the Burmese Communist Party, (*c*) the Socialists including the National Revolutionary Party. It speaks volumes for the confusion of this period that nearly all the leaders of the League held key posts in the Japanese administration of Burma. Through

the agency of the Communist Party, the Anti-Fascist People's Freedom League established contacts with Allied Headquarters in Colombo.

It is not necessary to describe the Japanese collapse or the detailed events leading to the grant of independence. The British had contemplated a period of rehabilitation before proceeding with constitutional development, but the AFPFL—disunited about many matters—were united in demanding immediate independence. The Nationalists were determined to use force if necessary and for this reason when the Burma Defence Army was disbanded at the end of the war, the AFPFL established the People's Volunteer Organization in its place.

The period was one of confusion in the Communist Party. Personal factions and disagreements about negotiations with the British led to the formation by Thakin Soe of a rival Communist Party of Burma, dedicated to an immediate revolution. Independence was to be gained without the tedious process of negotiation. A little later the Burmese Communist Party* quarrelled with and was expelled from the AFPFL. The disagreement was caused partly by Buddhist resentment of the Communist attitude towards religion, and partly by frank AFPFL criticism of Soviet totalitarianism. It was made worse by the wrangle as to the number of seats to be allowed to the Communists in the new Aung San AFPFL Government formed to take over the administration until the formal grant of independence.

In spite of these dissensions, in some directions the Communist strength was growing. The All-Burma Trade Union Congress became affiliated to the Communist controlled World Federation of Trade Unions, while the All-Burma Peasants Union, having the attractive object of distributing all land to the peasants and cancelling all rural indebtedness, became a useful vehicle for Communist propaganda.

In January 1948 Burma became independent and the friendly feeling towards Britain of the first Prime Minister, U Nu, and the majority of the people, was in marked contrast to the bitter opposition of the Burmese Communist Party to those provisions of the Nu-Attlee Agreement which gave to Britain military bases for three years, or which granted economic concessions to British business.

This bitterness fitted in well with the shift then taking place in Cominform policy. In January 1948, Ghoshal, an Indian Communist settled in Burma, brought back from Calcutta news of the projected Zdhanov line and in the famous Ghoshal thesis, demanded open insurrection. For domestic purposes this was translated into the familiar slogans—

* Not to be confused with the Communist Party of Burma.

'Independence was a show—the big bourgeoisie were lackeys of the imperialists—foreign property must be expropriated'—and the like. The insurrection began in March 1948 after a dramatic declaration by the Communist leader Than Tun, that the 'Bagaya hollow (in Rangoon) would be filled with Socialist bones'.

U Nu, by temperament a man of peace and himself a Socialist, made every effort to conciliate the Communists. He even went so far—against the wishes of his colleagues and advisers—as to promise to disseminate Marxist literature. The Communists, however, took their orders from abroad and would not be appeased.

We need not discuss the anarchy of the next three or four years. It is enough to say that the two Communist groups themselves conducted insurrections and often fought each other. The PVO took an active hand in violent opposition to government; two battalions of the Army mutinied; the Karens, who were bent on autonomy, also became rebels. The shifting alliances and antagonisms between the different bands of rebels were too bewildering to follow, and an unfortunate lorry driver bringing rice down to Rangoon from the North might well have to bribe his way through ten or twelve rebel camps, each attached temporarily and for convenience to some particular ideology. It appeared to most outside observers, including the present writer, that there was no hope of escape from this bedlam.

Moscow made no attempt to intervene amongst the quarrelling bands of Communists, but in 1951 Peking took a hand and advised them to seek peace with government and form a united front. It was perhaps the first time in Burma that China rather than Russia had stood forth as the leader of international Communism in South East Asia. The Communists, however, were not to be persuaded even by Peking and all U Nu's attempts at conciliation failed. Henceforth he had no choice but to adopt forceful measures against the Communists and other rebels.

The situation at this stage was almost impossible for a Westerner to follow, since all the fighting groups with the possible exception of the Karens seemed to accept Marxism in one form or another. It has been well described by Brimmell. 'Personalities apart, the struggle was between various interpretations of Marxism, roughly grouped into two: those involving the use of violence and those involving a Buddhistic approach, with many a subdivision on both sides. The AFPFL, dominated by the Socialist Party and Nu, had evolved a body of thought which might be termed, very vaguely, Marxist Buddhism, with Nu contributing more of the Buddhism and the Socialists more of the Marxism. The schismatic

BWPP were more Marxist and less Buddhist. On the other side of the military divide the two Communist parties were entirely Marxist and not Buddhist at all, but whereas the Burmese Communist Party accepted the leadership of the international Communist movement on the whole, the Communist Party of Burma did not. The People's Comrades Party—also Marxist—veered between the two in this respect, gradually gravitating to the Burmese Communist Party. The whole gamut, however, was Marxist, and even Marxist-Leninist, as in addition to the Marxist historical and economic views, all tended to subscribe to the Leninist organizational concept of minority leadership and democratic centralism —not to mention United Fronts and minimum programmes.'

Ba Swe, who was rapidly establishing his position as a strong and practical man, in contrast to the more idealistic U Nu, stated frankly that Marxism did not mean the acceptance of a Chinese or Russian pattern. 'It must be adapted to suit our surroundings . . . inasmuch as Russian methods are not conducive to success in China, Chinese methods are out of place in Burma.'

The Burmese Communists always managed to be a little out of step with international Communism, and in 1954, just when Moscow had decreed peaceful coexistence, the Communist Party of Burma persuaded the Burma Communist Party to take the offensive again. Chou En-lai took a hand at this stage and forced the Burmese Communist Party to negotiate again with the government for peace, but the Communist Party of Burma, led by that king of toughs Thakin Soe, held out until 1956 before agreeing to discuss peace terms. By that time Russia's brutal suppression of the revolt in Hungary, together with a growing fear of China, had strengthened public feeling against the Communists. Ordinary men were tired of the long drawn-out chaos and rallied to the side of U Nu whose courageous fight against the forces of disorder that at one time seemed overwhelming had earned great admiration. Under the village defence scheme volunteers were trained and armed to resist Communist and other insurgent attacks. To most outside observers this scheme seemed fraught with danger but it worked and gradually law and order were restored in large areas.

U Nu offered an amnesty to all who would lay down their arms. The Communists began to surrender in large numbers, but a minority of intransigent party members continued to hold out. By this time the current of Burmese feeling was running strongly against them and it was indeed the fear that U Nu might go too far in his endeavours to conciliate them together with the unpalatable truth that in the legislature he perforce

depended on the Communist minority for support, that led to a split in the AFPFL and the consequent intervention of the Army. Ne Win, the Commander-in-Chief became Prime Minister and virtual ruler of Burma in 1958, and it was only in 1960, when the Army was satisfied that the Communists would not have a decisive voice, that new elections were held and the Constitution restored.

It is generally believed that even now, if there seemed to be any danger of the Communists holding the balance of power, the Army would unhesitatingly intervene again. There are no present signs that this is likely. U Nu himself, though a convinced socialist, has never been a Communist and when in his address to the AFPFL in January 1958 he stated bluntly that Communism was not for Burma, there was no doubt that he spoke for the Burmese people as a whole. Socialism of various kinds is almost universal in Burma and has been so for several decades. At one time it seemed possible that the Communist form of it might triumph. The historical reasons that this did not happen and that the Communists became in fact rebels against the popular government have already been described. There are, however, more important reasons deeply rooted in the Burmese temperament. Their innate dislike of regimentation of thought or act; their unwillingness to accept foreign dictation; and the devotion to Buddhism which makes the open materialism of the Communists unattractive to them—all these suggest that moderate Socialism in which even private enterprise has a part to play, is more likely than Communism to be the governing philosophy of the Burmese if they are left alone. Whether they will be left alone, or whether China on the march in Asia will intervene in these matters, remains to be seen.

MALAYA

In most of the colonial countries of Asia, the Communists had at least the opportunity of founding their movement on nationalist feeling against the ruling power, though in some cases they failed to make the most of it. In Malaya, no such foundation existed.

By the early years of the twentieth century, the Chinese were growing rapidly in the Federated States, while in Singapore they constituted the overwhelming majority of the people. Only in the northern States were the Malays in a large majority, and there they were long untouched by the current of modern thought and feeling. The impact of the British conquest, working through the Sultan, had been light and when nationalist feelings began to develop, they were directed not so much against

the British rulers as against the Chinese, whose superior energies and abilities had given them a commanding position in trade and small-scale industry, and thus aroused Malay jealousy. The Chinese were in a dynamic mood after the Revolution of 1911 and unlike the earlier groups of immigrants they held aloof from the Malays and developed a strong overseas Chinese nationalism. This in turn reacted on the Malays and induced those positive nationalist feelings which British rule had not evoked.

In the early twenties the link with the Kuomintang made it possible for Chinese Communists to carry on propaganda in Malaya. Amongst the Malays the response was negligible—so much so that the principal Communist organizer in South East Asia condemned them roundly for their indifference—but some slight impression was made on the Chinese in Malay. In 1927 when the Chinese Communists and the Kuomintang were at war, it became more difficult for Communist agents to operate under the watchful eye of the British Intelligence Service. Some activity was nevertheless carried on by Chinese Communist agents through the South Sea General Labour Union and the Youth League. Strong action by the police disturbed these activities and in 1928 an attempt was made to establish a Malayan Communist Party not organically connected with China. Once again, good intelligence work followed by arrest of key personnel upset the plans of the new Party which then and throughout its career suffered from ignorant and inefficient leadership. At the beginning of the thirties it could almost be said that the Communists had made little impact on the Chinese in Malaya and none on the Malays.

The Trade Depression and the hardships it entailed were naturally grist to the Communist mill and in the early thirties rapid progress was made by the Party amongst the Chinese. The growing fear of Japan was exploited and the Party began to operate from the Malayan anti-imperialist league. The Malays, however, were still more nervous of the Chinese than of the Japanese and took little part in this new movement.

In Malaya even more than in most Asian countries, the first year or so of the war presented the Chinese Communists with the awkward problem of choosing between Japan and Britain as public enemy No. 1. They organized an anti-imperialist front and they engineered strikes, but Brimmell has shrewdly commented that their real mood at this time was one of an emerging imperialism which aimed at replacing British by Chinese rule. The Malays were very conscious of this and were not responsive.

When Japan entered the war, the Malayan Communist Party offered to co-operate with the Allies. After an initial refusal Britain accepted the

offer and assisted in the formation of a Malayan People's Anti-Japanese Army, which, after the fall of Singapore, put up what has been described as the best resistance movement in Asia. It was facilitated by the fact that at this time there was no dichotomy in the minds of the Chinese in Malaya. All alike, Communists or non-Communists, regarded Japan as an enemy and her attempts during the occupation to exploit the hostility between the Chinese and the Malays were only partially successful.

After the Japanese surrender, a period of confusion and anarchy gave a great opportunity to the Communists, who established their authority, through the medium of People's Councils, throughout most of the country, though they remained in constant conflict with the Malays in the villages. A temporary settlement with the British in the latter part of 1947 still left the Communists in possession of the arms and organization of the MPAJA.

The war had stimulated nationalism amongst the Malays and about this time a Malay Nationalist Party came into being as a rival to the Chinese Communist Party.

Britain frankly recognized that the time was ripe for Malayan independence, but the negotiations as to its form and in particular as to the position of the Sultans, the relations of the Federal State to Singapore and the extension of citizenship to the Chinese population, gave rise to many dissensions. The Conservative United Malaya Nationalist Association formed by the Prime Minister of Johore—the more radical Malay Nationalist Party—and the Chinese—all had to be satisfied. The resulting complications together with the U.S.S.R. policy at that time of co-operating to some degree with the Western democracies, had led to the formation in 1946 of what was nominally a United Front, in reality dominated by the Chinese Communists and a few left-wing Malay intellectuals. At that time there were hardly any Malay 'proletarians'. Within that front the Malayan Communist Party revived the Singapore General Labour Union and established similar bodies on the mainland. By 1947 the Singapore General Labour Union dominated the labour force throughout Malaya and as it was affiliated to the World Federation of Trade Unions, it was a definite accession of strength to the Communists.

If they had been content to proceed on these lines, the Communists would almost certainly have continued to increase in influence, but in 1948 they were directed by the Cominform to organize a mass struggle against British imperialism. The wartime Anti-Japanese Army, which had never been allowed to disintegrate, was now revived as the Malayan

People's Anti-British Army and it soon started a campaign of terrorism and murder carried out from headquarters in the jungle.

It is not necessary to follow this terrorist campaign in detail. It was based on an entirely wrong estimate by the Communists of the possibilities of revolution throughout Asia and of the influence of the Soviet camp in the world at large. It also suffered from a failure to understand the Malay character, nor did it allow sufficiently for the courage of British planters when faced with terrorists. Malay support was not forthcoming; Chinese labour was indifferent, and the Indians were aloof. Supplies were impossible to maintain. Not even the majority of the Chinese were behind the campaign, and the attempt to obtain food and other essentials by terrorism and blackmail built up a strong resistance to the movement amongst both Chinese and Malayans. This resistance was strengthened when Chinese squatters on the edge of the jungle were gathered together in protective villages. The Communist leaders were not wise enough to acknowledge the hopelessness of their situation and one among them who had the temerity to advise postponing the campaign until support was forthcoming was executed for his pains. It was not until 1951 that the Politburo recognized failure and called off violence. The Party army then retired to the jungle to cultivate food crops and become independent of the populace for their supplies.

Britain was now faced with the question as to how to give self-government and yet protect the Malayans from oppression by the Chinese. Fortunately at this stage the non-Communist Chinese, represented by the Malayan Chinese Association entered into an alliance with the UMNO. The alliance made practical suggestions for the move towards independence and agreed on a wide definition of citizen that would embrace a large number of Chinese Nationals.

This was, in fact, the death knell of the Communist insurrection, though a good deal of sparring took place between the Party and the Government. Tungku Rahman, the Chief Minister after the 1955 election, was prepared to grant an amnesty to Communists who surrendered, but rightly refused to negotiate with an illegal party. The position of the Malayan Communist Party was embarrassing, since their refusal to surrender forced them to ignore the new Cominform line of peaceful coexistence. Tungku Rahman knew that the majority, both of Chinese and Malays, were behind him in his refusal to give ground and he insisted that Communists who surrendered must be under police surveillance for a considerable period.

In August 1957 the Federation of Malaya became independent and it

was soon apparent that the Communists had lost in the struggle with Tungku Rahman.

In Singapore the position was more difficult as the very left-wing People's Action Front gained a good deal of strength in the world of labour, though it only secured three seats in the legislature in the 1954 elections. It was essentially a Chinese left-wing party, some sections of which were very close to the Communists. The non-Communist section emerged successfully from the resulting contest, and self-government began under auspices which from the non-Communist point of view seemed reasonably favourable.

On the whole, the Communists had failed to acquire dominion even amongst the Chinese in Malaya and had little support amongst the Malays. It would nevertheless be very rash to predict the final failure of Communism. Year by year Chiang Kai-shek becomes more and more discredited and Mao Tse-tung stands for the idea of progress. This tendency may well grow, and battles between Communists and non-Communists in Malaya may form part of the Chinese struggle to possess the soul of Asia.

XIII

Communism in Britain

THE SOCIAL Democratic Federation, founded in 1881 by H. M. Hyndman, a journalist and stockbroker, is generally regarded as the precursor of the Communist Party of Great Britain, but as Hyndman was described by Engels as an arch-conservative, the claim need not be pressed too far. The Party consisted largely of intellectuals, and in spite of its organization of unemployed demonstrations—one of which led to the Trafalgar Square riots on Bloody Sunday in 1887—it made little impact on the public. Early in the twentieth century, some Clydeside members broke off from the Social Democratic Federation and formed the Socialist Labour Party, which must not be confused with either the Labour Party or the Independent Labour Party. Similar organizations on a small scale were set up in Wales. Unlike the Social Democratic Federation these new movements struck roots amongst the working classes.

At the beginning of the First World War a further split took place in the ranks of the Social Democratic Federation, which was now known as the British Socialist Party. Hyndman and his early colleagues were defeated and the British Socialist Party came under the control of extremists who opposed the war effort. The patriotism of the Trade Union Congress in accepting many wartime restrictions on the normal rates of labour played into the hands of the British Socialist Party and the Socialist Labour Party, who organized strikes on the Clyde and elsewhere and set up the National Committee of Shop Stewards as well as the very militant Unofficial Reform Committee in Wales.

The Russian Revolution did not result in any substantial accession of strength to these bodies, but when in January 1919 the Comintern was formed, the various Marxist groups in Britain began to examine the possibility of uniting to form a Party which could belong to the International Committee. Disagreement at once appeared as to whether or not the new Party contemplated should enter Parliament and if possible join the Labour Party, or should confine itself to industrial action. Generally speaking the British Socialist Party, which had affiliated itself to the Labour Party in 1916, favoured entering Parliament, while the majority in the Socialist Labour Party supported by that ardent propagandist and suffragette Sylvia Pankhurst, were strongly opposed to doing so. In a quarrel of this nature, a reference obviously had to be made

to the High Priest, and in July 1919 Sylvia Pankhurst wrote to Lenin for advice. Lenin's reply strongly favoured 'participation in Parliament and adhesion to the Labour Party on condition of free and independent Communist activity'. In the Unity Conference which followed, many delegates who had originally opposed parliamentary activities accepted Lenin's view as binding, but the indomitable Sylvia Pankhurst dissented and formed the Communist Party (British Section). The Unity Conference thereafter lost no time in forming the Communist Party of Great Britain in August 1920, and in the course of the resolution supporting affiliation to the Labour Party, one spokesman said frankly that it was up to the Communists: 'first of all to help the Labour Party get into office and then when they had got into office, our first act is to kick them out'.

In addition to the Communist Party of Great Britain and the Communist Party (British Section), there were small Communist groups in Scotland. The dissentients, however, were in the main won round by Lenin at the Second Congress of the International and in January 1921 unity was achieved. For all practical purposes the Communist Party of Great Britain was now the sole British Communist body in Britain and was committed to a policy of entering Parliament if possible and seeking affiliation with the Labour Party. The conference at which these decisions were taken terminated with the Bolshevik anthem and according to *The Worker*, a delegate declared that they were all animated by 'a breath of the East, a breath from Moscow, where there is wisdom'.*

The Labour Party was not impressed with the wisdom of Moscow and in 1921 rejected the application of the Communist Party of Great Britain for affiliation. Exact figures as to the strength of the Communist Party in this country at the time are not available, but a reasonable estimate is that its paid-up membership was about 3,000 including a fair number of Irishmen with a grievance against Britain and many immigrants from the Continent. The Party was not yet disciplined on true Communist lines and Sylvia Pankhurst and other rebels fought strenuously against the imposition of directives from Moscow. The spirit of Communism was in the end too strong for these sturdy individualists and in 1922 Palme Dutt and two other leading Party members framed rules based on Lenin's Twenty-One Theses. The Twelfth Thesis laid down the principle of democratic centralization, which was explained as meaning that iron discipline must prevail and that the Party centre must be equipped with the most comprehensive power. The Sixteenth Thesis stated categorically

* Quoted from Pelling's *The British Communist Party* from which we have drawn freely in this chapter.

that all decisions of the Comintern were binding on all Parties affiliated to it. Russia in fact was to have the whip hand. The rules of the British party faithfully followed this pattern and established the Central Committee as the supreme authority. Party members were in fact to do what Pollitt and Palme Dutt ordered and they in turn would obey Moscow.

It was not long before the Communist Party of Great Britain had the opportunity of demonstrating its subservience to the Comintern. In 1921 Moscow directed the formation of a British Bureau of Profintern (the Red Labour International) and granted a subsidy for this purpose. The Bureau was promptly organized, but almost before it had begun work the Comintern decided on the tactics of the United Front. There must therefore be no conflict with the International Federation of Trade Unions in Amsterdam. The British Bureau must become 'not an organization of Unions but only of revolutionary minorities of Unions', and its task was to convert those minorities into majorities. To allay suspicions, the Bureau was to be converted into the Minority Movement. At the same time the trade depression and widespread unemployment offered a valuable opportunity to the Party and thanks to skilful work by a young British Communist the control of the newly founded National Unemployed Workers' Committee fell largely into the hands of the Minority Movement, though the Committee itself contained relatively few Communists. The Minority Movement, with the powerful support of A. J. Cook, the General Secretary of the Miners' Union, was well organized and the ten delegates sent by it to the Trade Union Congress in 1925 were able to carry a number of resolutions.

Encouraged by this success, the Party soon overreached itself in the industrial sphere and when the Trade Union Congress had to recognize failure and call off the General Strike in 1926, the Communist Party of Great Britain not only urged workers to stay on strike, but bitterly attacked the General Council of the Trade Union Congress. This action gained the Party some temporary support and its membership rose rapidly, but when the lessons of the General Strike had been generally learned the working class turned against militancy and the membership of the Party again dropped.

In the meantime the Communists had not been idle in the political field. In 1922 two Party members had been elected to Parliament, one of them—the Parsee Saklatvala—having stood as a Labour candidate. The Labour Party soon became alert to these Trojan horse tactics and in 1924 they barred members of the Communist Party from being Labour

candidates for Parliament. The general public, too, became increasingly averse to foreign interference in British politics. The refusal of the Labour Government to prosecute J. R. Campbell, the editor of the Communist *Workers' Weekly*, for his appeal to troops not to shoot in the event of war, led to the downfall of the government, while the famous Zinoviev letter, which may or may not have been authentic, but which purported to convey the Comintern's instructions for the organization of Communist cells in the armed forces, contributed considerably to the failure of the Labour Party at the elections of October 1924.

The Communist Party now developed to a high degree the technique of the 'fraction', or hard core of well-disciplined and organized Communists in any representative institution. Experience soon showed that by exploiting the apathy of the majority, a few determined individuals could plant their own men so firmly in the executive committees of such bodies that they were virtually irremovable. This technique was applied not only to labour unions, but to what a leading European Communist described as 'a whole solar system of organizations—controlled by the Party, but nominally independent'.

These tactics were applied to a body known as the National Left Wing Movement founded at the end of 1925 for the purpose of securing a reversal of the Labour Party decision barring Communist candidates for Parliament. The leaders of the Labour Party soon exposed the real nature of the new movement and ruthlessly expelled branches which sought to circumvent the ban. It may well be that the tactics of the 'fraction' at this time did the Communists more harm than good. Any such effect was heightened by the British Government statement that 'Arcos', the U.S.S.R. trading agency, had been a centre of espionage.

The Party membership declined rapidly in 1927 and by 1928 the policy of the Comintern had changed again and in spite of the protests of some of the British delegates to the Sixth Comintern Congress in July 1928, the Communist Party of Great Britain was ordered to oppose the Labour Party more clearly and sharply. The British protest which was the last attempt of the British Communists to obtain some degree of freedom, makes pathetic reading.

'The only possible method of discussion for the Communist International, in our opinion,' they declared, 'is to debate questions upon their merits, with full freedom and encouragement for all sections and individual comrades to state their point of view freely, frankly, and fraternally. The method of hurrying to tie labels on comrades who hold different opinions, before a final decision has been reached, can only

result in destroying independent thought and in robbing the Comintern discussions of much of their value.'

Such rebellion against the principles of International Communism was intolerable, and the Comintern set to work, partly through the agency of the Young Communist League in Britain, to undermine the British Party leadership. It was successful and in November 1929 the Communist Party of Great Britain abandoned the principle of free open elections for the Central Committee, and instituted the system of the panel. Only the names of those put on the panel by a reliable Commission were put up for election. The rebels had lost and the Party was now completely ruled through the agency of Dutt, Pollitt and William Rust. To the latter, in spite of the fact that he had never been a journalist, was entrusted the task of starting the *Daily Worker*. Stalin's grip was now secure.

Having broken with the Trade Union Congress, the Communists set up 'struggle committees' and 'strike committees', and against Pollitt's advice the Communist Party of Great Britain were directed by the Comintern to organize an independent Seamen's Union. It was a complete failure. The Party then turned its attention to the unemployed. True to accepted Communist principles they cared little about securing relief for the misery of the workless, but were anxious mainly to consolidate the National Unemployed Workers' Committee into a revolutionary organization. All these attempts failed because, as one of their leaders frankly confessed, the workers were not interested in gaining power, but only in obtaining better conditions of employment. The Minority Movement began to disintegrate.

In 1933 it suited Russia's international policy to introduce the tactics of the Popular Front. Once again the Labour Party rejected advances from the Communists and similar approaches to the Independent Labour Party were rebuffed, largely because of the obvious fact of Russian dictatorship over the whole Communist movement. Amongst the intellectuals and young idealists, the policy of the Popular Front paid dividends, since the fear of Fascism was strong in their minds at this time. The membership of the Young Communist League grew to two thousand by 1935. This expansion was helped considerably by the establishment of Left Book Shops, and it is a little ironical that a great impetus to Communism should have been given by the Left Book Club, established by Victor Gollancz, who himself was far from being a Communist. The Party also gained added strength as a result of the Spanish Civil War and the natural admiration of the young for the idealists of the International Brigade, organized by the Comintern to support the Republicans. This

advantage was, however, more than offset by a strong revulsion against the ruthless Stalinist purges in Russia, and British Communist leaders did their party great harm by attempting to defend the murders perpetrated by Stalin.

The outbreak of War created confusion in the British Communist camp. The Party leaders began by declaring their support for democracy against Fascism, and expressing their determination to defend Poland. A few days later, when it became known that Russia had entered into an alliance with Germany to dismember Poland, they were in a quandary. According to Douglas Hyde, who was in close touch with the Party leaders, the Central Committee was on the point of issuing a manifesto in support of the war against Hitler, when Springhall, who represented the Communist Party of Great Britain at Comintern headquarters, arrived from Moscow to inform the Central Committee that Britain was fighting an imperialist war. There was apparently a struggle inside the Central Committee, but the Moscow directive prevailed and the Communist Party of Great Britain embarked on opposition to the War. The invasion of Finland by Russia excited widespread indignation in Britain and made the position of the Communists even more difficult, but they showed considerable skill in exploiting the necessary wartime restrictions. In 1940 the *Daily Worker* was suppressed, but the Party managed to distribute daily bulletins throughout the country.

Nevertheless its fortunes were at a low ebb when the German attack on Russia put an end to the Party's difficulties. The Communists at once offered full support to the Churchill Government and in the following year or so they were able to cash in handsomely on public enthusiasm for Russia. The dissolution of the Comintern relieved them of an embarrassment, though it made little practical difference as the leaders of the British Party were safe disciples of Moscow. The new circumstances seemed to make the time propitious for a big drive to expand Party membership, even though this involved such a lowering of standards that a Party spokesman stated frankly, 'we must not demand of the average new worker the same standard of activity as we get from the older comrades'. A little later it was in fact made clear that all a member had to do was to pay his dues.

In spite of the rapid expansion in Communist numbers that resulted from this policy, the Labour Party kept its head and in June 1943 decisively rejected another application from the Communist Party of Great Britain for affiliation. When the War ended, the enthusiasm for Russia quickly faded away and in the Parliamentary elections of July 1945 only

two out of twenty-one Communist candidates were elected. The Party had nevertheless greatly improved its position in the Trade Unions as a result of its wartime work in factories in support of maximum production. It built up its strength rapidly in such unions as the Amalgamated Engineering Union, the Electrical Trades Union, the Transport and General Workers' Union, and one competent modern writer has gone so far as to say that at this time the Communists were almost in control of the trade union movement in Britain. Their success, however, had been based on co-operation with the Labour Party even though they were not allowed to join it and when in 1947 another swing of Russian policy compelled the British Communists to oppose the Labour Government and to denounce the Marshall Plan, their wartime gains were quickly lost. The decline was most noticeable amongst the members of the Young Communists League.

In a desperate effort to retrieve their position the Communist Party of Great Britain then returned to the policy of satellite organizations. The Peace Front was perhaps the most effective of these organizations, and many simple souls supported what they believed to be a genuine attempt to save mankind from destruction. Once again the Labour Party kept its head and proscribed the numerous bodies of this kind and indeed from that time onward it has regularly published lists of societies and associations which are really cloaks for Communist activities. This bold action, combined with the steps taken by the Labour Government to implement the plans for a Welfare State, made the position of the Communist Party precarious.

At this stage the Trades Union Congress warned British workers that the object of the Communist Party of Great Britain was to sabotage the European Recovery Programme and in 1948 it suggested that unions should consider debarring Communists from Union office. The response naturally differed from Union to Union, but the action of the Trades Union Congress undoubtedly weakened the position of the Communists in many industries, though they could not be dislodged from such bodies as the Electrical Trades Union. Nor could the Trades Union Congress, in 1949, prevent the Communists from organizing a wholly unjustified dock strike, from which the British dockers had nothing to gain.

In the meantime, the Communist Party of Great Britain had yet another experience of a double switch in policy under Soviet direction. In 1947, Party leaders were almost lyrical in their praise of the virtues of Tito and the achievements of Yugoslavia, but within a few days of Stalin's break with Tito on January 1, 1948, the Political Committee of the Communist

Party of Great Britain found no difficulty at all in supporting the new policy of the U.S.S.R. Before long the Party leaders were speaking and writing of the duplicity of Tito and the oppression of the workers of Yugoslavia. A few years later, they again had to recant. The U.S.S.R. had tried to patch up a peace with Tito, and Pollitt stated blandly that 'we, in the Executive Committee of the British Communist Party, were misled by evidence that is now stated to have been fabricated, and we now withdraw our previous attacks on Tito and Yugoslavia'. Could subservience go further?

This *volte face*, together with Dutt's attempts to minimize Stalin's crimes after the Khrushchev revolution, seriously disconcerted the rank and file of the Communist Party of Great Britain and indeed led to open criticism of the entire working of the Party. Events in Poland and Hungary proved even more embarrassing for the leaders. Intellectuals and workers alike attacked the British Central Committee. A Commission of Inner Party Democracy set up to examine the situation failed to reach agreement. The Majority Report insisted on continuing the iron discipline which had up to then prevailed, while the Minority Report expressed the view that 'democratic centralism' was not suitable to Britain, opposed the system of election of Committee members from a prepared panel and demanded reasonable freedom of discussion inside the Party. This was perhaps the most serious dissension which had yet occurred within the Communist Party of Great Britain, and its effect was not only to lead to a serious loss of membership, but to destroy the enthusiasm of many of those who remained in the Party.

It had in fact become clear, first, that 'democratic centralism' was not acceptable to the British working classes, though it might attract some of the intellectuals; secondly, that a Party which is compelled to switch its policy from time to time at the dictates of a foreign organization is unlikely to secure political support in this very insular country; and thirdly, that, as Pelling puts it, 'all the absurdities of the history of the party spring from this one fact, that it has been a revolutionary party in a non-revolutionary situation'.

Communism and the welfare State accord ill together and it is safe to say that there is no future for Communism as a mass movement in Britain. It may nevertheless exert a great disruptive influence as a result of the diligence of the Communist minority and the apathy of the majority in the Trade Unions.

XIV

Communist Technique

THE PLAN

AT THE outset of their campaigns, Communists and Fascists alike declared their aggressive intentions so frankly that nobody took them seriously. Hitler set forth his philosophy and his aims with the utmost clarity in *Mein Kampf*, while the Communists provided the world with a blue-print as far back as 1920. At the Second Comintern Conference Lenin enunciated twenty-one theses which at once became articles of Communist faith. They rested on the principles that the Communist revolution must be world wide; that the Communist Party must be truly international, highly disciplined and completely controlled from Moscow; and that since the Soviet Union was 'the only fatherland of the international proletariat' any other patriotism must be ruthlessly discarded.

This led naturally to the principle that Communists everywhere must join in the defence of the Holy Land of Communism against all enemies. Another article stated that workers in non-Communist countries should refuse to transport arms and equipment for use against the U.S.S.R. and 'should also by legal or illegal means carry on propaganda amongst troops sent against the Soviet Republic'—a contingency which did not then seem remote. Clearly, these obligations could only be carried out after a good deal of preparatory work and another thesis therefore directed that in non-Communist countries 'persistent and systematic propaganda should be carried on amongst the armed forces, and Communist nuclei must be formed in every military unit'. Yet another article called for similar operations inside Trade Unions and organizations of that kind. Lenin had in fact initiated psychological warfare against the world.

No party which did not accept these theses could be affiliated to the Communist International. They were in fact accepted everywhere. The U.S.A. Communist Party adopted them lock, stock and barrel, while in Britain, the acute brain of Palme Dutt incorporated them in a report which went on to explain the mechanism necessary for the policy of infiltration. The report was in due course accepted.

Although the Comintern was abolished in 1943 and the Twenty-One Theses were never re-enacted in their full form, they have in fact governed Communist activity to this day.

The war thus declared on the world was to be conducted partly through purely Communist bodies; partly through satellite agencies devoted in theory to humanitarian purposes, but in fact Communist controlled; and partly by means of infiltration into and ultimate domination of non-Communist organizations. In all these operations 'reformists', that is those organizations which strove to improve the lot of the masses by constitutional means, were to be regarded as the worst enemies, though it might sometimes be tactically necessary to co-operate with them in the process of infiltration.

THE COMMUNIST PARTY IN THE OPEN

According to orthodox theory the purely Communist organizations must have an illegal as well as a legal aspect. This was necessary, not only in order to enable Party work to be continued if the authorities clamped down on open activity, but also to keep alive the pure revolutionary flame. In the absence of some illegal activities, the Party might degenerate into a body of 'reformists'.

The structure of the legal organizations in the U.S.A., which well illustrates the system enforced everywhere, was laid down in 1936 in the Manual of Organization by J. C. Peters, a leading Communist agent in that country.*

Unit Bureau
Unit Membership Meeting
Section Bureau
Section Committee
Section Convention
District Bureau
District Committee
District Convention
Political Bureau of the Central Committee
Central Committee
National Convention
Political Secretariat of the Communist International
Presidium of the Communist International
Executive Committee of the Communist International—the ECCI
World Congress of the Communist International

* Vide *The Technique of Communism* by Louis F. Budenz—himself a Communist at that time.

The most important facts about the organization do not, however, appear from this table. They are, first, that at each level the bureau is the master and not the servant of the group; and secondly that each organ is completely bound by the decision of the next higher unit. It is rather as though, in a limited company, the shareholders were bound by the decision of the Board of Directors, while the Board had to carry out the orders of the Chairman—and with that curious inversion of language which is so often found in Communist literature, this is called 'democratic centralism'. Even the limited degree of freedom which this system might allow is in fact absent, since the general rule throughout the world —in spite of temporary departures from it in Britain—has been that in elections to the Central and District Committees members can only vote for or against an approved list of candidates. Control is in fact autocratic and continuous.

This rigidity of control would not be of much use unless adequate arrangements existed by which Moscow could communicate its orders. This is in fact done in two ways. In the first place Moscow has in most countries its Party representative through whom directions are sent. He then passes them to the Party leader, who addresses the Central Committee, after which members of that Committee address meetings of the District Committees—and the process continues with remarkable regularity to the lowest level. The system works with almost military precision. In the case of Britain we have seen how the Party has seldom, if ever, failed to switch its policy in obedience to orders from Moscow, and in the case of the U.S.A., Louis F. Budenz, a former Communist, is able to assert without fear of contradiction, that 'the record of the Communist Party of the U.S.A., as recorded in its official proceedings, proves that it has never deviated by a hair's breadth from the current policies laid down by the Kremlin'.

Nevertheless, periodical meetings would be a poor substitute for the continuous direction considered necessary and this is in fact achieved by means of a number of official Communist journals. The most important of those for a decade was *For a Lasting Peace*. This publication was started when the Cominform was formed and by 1953 it was appearing in nineteen languages. It was the vehicle in which Communists were given the Moscow line on the issues of the day, and conveyed such important statements of policy as the Zdhanov attack on 'imperialism' and the U.S.A.; the condemnation of Yugoslavia; and the formation of the Peace Front. Second only in importance to this journal is *The Daily Worker*—a more popular paper which has been described as 'not a daily newspaper in the normal sense of the word, but a telegraph agency of immediate direc-

tives'. It is published independently in each of a number of countries, under the direction of the National Politburo. The main object of this paper is not to give news, but to provide members with the earliest possible information of the Party line—a matter of great importance in a Party which tolerates no deviation, and in which failure to anticipate what Moscow will decide convicts one of ignorance of the infallible science of Marxian dialectics.

All this, however, is only the bare bones of the organization. It is almost impossible for a non-Communist to understand the tremendous pressure of a highly organized Party spirit, which inspires some men and makes others powerless to resist; or to feel the anxiety with which a Communist awaits instructions from Moscow; or to realize how strongly Communists are urged to make their wives Communists or leave them. Some conception of the psychological forces involved can be gained from books such as *The Communist Technique in Britain* written by Bob Barke, formerly a leading London Communist. His narrative is worth following. The British Communist Party, he tells us, had some British characteristics until Lenin 'gently laughed it out of its swaddling clothes' and made it a replica of Communist parties throughout the world. The weekly membership subscriptions of the local parties are negligible and since it is a Communist principle that non-Communists must be made to pay, an important part of the duties of the branches is the organization of collections for this or that fighting fund—and often a humanitarian appeal can be thrown in to soften the hearts of potential donors. Very little is spent on office organization, since meetings are held mainly in the houses of important members, where submissive non-Communist wives will wait outside and make the tea.

The local officials of the branches may not be paid more than the average workers of their trades and they certainly have to work far harder and under much stricter discipline than their former colleagues. Their reward is a considerable measure of authority in their own area—for as Darke tells us frankly, whereas in other political parties the rank and file may influence policy, it never happens in the Communist Party. On the other hand the branch officials are small fry in the Party hierarchy and there is ample evidence that a demand for an explanation from the District or Central Committee would reduce them almost to tears. Back benchers or even local leaders in the Party are allowed no views. The obligations of Party membership are heavy. A member must in the first place join a trade union, if he is a worker, and take an active part in the meetings of the union. He must also:

Pay his fourpence a week subscription (to the Communist Party).
Support *The Daily Worker* Fighting Fund.
Collect money for *The Daily Worker* Fighting Fund.
Sell *The Daily Worker*.
Buy as much Party literature as possible.
Sell as much Party literature as possible.
Attend every branch meeting of his union.
Turn out for every demonstration in his area.
Turn out for every District demonstration.
Join an Anglo-Iron Curtain Friendship Society.
Join another Anglo-Iron Curtain Friendship Society.
Get his wife to join the Party.
Get his father to join.
Get his children to join the Young Communist League.
Do as he's told.
Hate America.
Love Russia.

No excuses are accepted and once a year a Party member must submit a return giving an account of his activities—and many questions are asked if his story is unsatisfactory. He is also required to make a major business of selling *The Daily Worker*. This is indeed the supreme obligation of the individual British Communist and 'the selling of *The Daily Worker* is organized like a military campaign'. In Hackney, Darke tells us, 'the Branch membership turned out *en masse* to sell the special editions of the *Worker* . . . and some Communists worked themselves into a nervous breakdown over the business of selling the *Worker*' '. . . on the day of the special article no Party member is excused from the operation'! A housewife, for example, is told to get up at five in the morning to take a quire of *Daily Worker*'s to this factory or that and sell them before she goes home to see the children off to school. Other literature too has to be sold and there are many reports of Communists who have destroyed the pamphlets and paid for them out of their own pockets rather than admit failure to the Party bosses. Discipline is indeed rigid and though in non-Communist countries men cannot be sent to the firing squad, the Communist practice of public self-criticism and confession exercises so strong a pressure as to be irresistible except for the strongest of characters.

This pressure penetrates even to the home and Darke tells us that if a member is disturbed by his wife's fears, the Borough Secretary's harsh advice will be 'recruit her to the Party, if she won't join, leave her'. Love,

wife, children, parents—nothing counts except the Party, with its militant atheism, its materialism and its determination to conquer the world. The violent destruction of the bourgeois State has always been and still is the aim of the Communist Party.

ILLEGAL OPERATIONS

Since this aim cannot be proclaimed too publicly, the illegal aspect of Party work is of great importance. Secret operations involve either espionage or subversion. Espionage is not peculiar to the Communists and requires no discussion other than to comment that, unlike most civilized countries, the U.S.S.R. has no hesitation about spying on its wartime allies—as for example, Canada where the time of the Military Attaché to the Russian Embassy during the Second World War was mainly occupied in reporting Canadian and American military secrets.

Of greater importance are the Party's subversive activities, which may be illustrated by reference to the affairs of three countries. The most spectacular of the relevant stories is that of Beauregard just outside Paris. At the end of the War, the U.S.S.R. obtained permission from the French Government to set up in Beauregard an organization ostensibly for the purpose of repatriating Russian prisoners of war who had been drafted to France by the Germans for defence construction work. Three separate Russian intelligence and counter-espionage groups accompanied the officers concerned with repatriation. They organized military training courses for French Communists; trained Frenchmen or Poles in industrial espionage; taught the technique of organizing strikes and mass demonstrations; and assisted the French Communist Party in gaining control of important sections of the trade union movement. In November 1947, the operations of the Beauregard planners led to simultaneous strikes all over the country, which nearly paralysed government. The authorities at last took strong action and the raids on Beauregard headquarters led to the discovery of anti-tank guns and everything required for a revolt. The French Government expelled important members of the Russian repatriation mission from the country and called up reservists to reinforce the forces of law and order. The movement was completely crushed, but in the process it became clear that the Beauregard planners had organized a full-scale national revolt.

A second illustration can be taken from the second Greek Civil War. When the U.S.S.R. plans to dominate Greece at the end of 1944 were thwarted by the British, the Communist controlled ELAM organization

was in theory wound up, but its most important members went into hiding in the mountains. In the course of the next year or two, instructional schools were established in the countries of the Lower Danube, where Communists were trained by Russian and Czech officers before being sent to Greece to carry on an underground movement. A Free Greece radio station, established in Yugoslavia, announced the formation of a Greek democratic force in the mountains of Greece, and Greek Communists in considerable numbers joined the Greek Democratic Army to which the foreign trainees had been recruited. (It is, of course, always important to remember that the word 'democratic' as used by the Communists means something quite different from its connotation in Western Europe.) Before long Greece was in the throes of a civil war in which the Communists received ill-concealed Russian support. They had also the advantage of being able to retire into adjacent Communist countries when things went against them. Fighting between the Greek army and the Communists continued throughout most of 1949 and over a hundred thousand casualties occurred.

By October of that year it was clear that the government was getting the upper hand and without any consultation with the rebels themselves Radio Free Greece announced the end of hostilities.

The underground Communist organization was nevertheless maintained. Finance was provided by means of an elaborate system of smuggling funds in from abroad and a very widespread spy ring was organized, primarily for the purpose of preparing for another Communist rising at a more propitious time. The key men in the organizations were a Frenchman named Economeau, who had previously been employed by the U.S.S.R. to train French Communists in Poland; Nicholas Vavoudes, a former Signals officer on the staff of the U.S.S.R. Military Mission to Greece during the War; and a very wealthy Greek Communist Demetrius Batses. As appeared at the trial of the conspirators later, the entire network was controlled by the U.S.S.R. Military Intelligence authority, who apparently also maintained a quite independent espionage system of their own. Thanks to great pertinacity on the part of the Greek Security Police the network was discovered and after the execution or imprisonment of the leaders of the movement, it disintegrated. Greece in fact witnessed the only Communist failure in South East Europe, but the important thing for our purpose is that the attempted subversion was carried out in a country with which the U.S.S.R. was at peace.

A few years later a complicated Russian underground network was uncovered in Sweden. The story of it would make an excellent thriller,

but here we can only note that initially the organization was controlled and inspired from the Soviet Embassy in Sweden, but that after the Embassy's part in these transactions came into the limelight, the management was transferred to the Czech and Rumanian Embassies. Swedish Communists, of course, were deeply involved in the organization. The operations were not confined to normal espionage, but included the organization of railway sabotage groups, which would interrupt communications if Russia were at war with Sweden, and the establishment of 'anti-demolition' groups, which would prevent the adoption of a scorched earth policy if at any time Sweden and Russia were at war.

Soviet subversive activities in Canada and Australia, which were examined exhaustively by Royal Commissions, followed a similar pattern. The Russian Embassies were focal points in the organization, the activities were carried on in the territories of Russia's allies in the War, and the U.S.S.R. was in fact guilty of suborning the nationals of those countries which it professed to regard as friends. All this is, of course, in keeping with the Party code. The Communists in all countries, and their Russian masters say frankly that they are at war with the world and since they pour contempt on 'bourgeois morality', it must be taken for granted that no holds are barred. Condemnation would be meaningless. It is more to the point to regard the Embassies and other agencies of Communist controlled countries with unlimited suspicion at all times.

SATELLITE ORGANIZATIONS

The theory of the satellite organizations is simple. If a decent-looking man comes to my door and asks for a donation to a fund for starving children in a famine-stricken country, my first instinct is to believe him and give what I can. He may be a crook—but if he is genuine and I have refused to help, I shall reproach myself for days. If, therefore, the Communists can set up societies dedicated to objects that appeal to the heart of the ordinary man—universal peace, the protection of the young, the amelioration of the lot of the poor—they will gather in a lot of simpletons like myself. They will be careful to keep control of the executive committees of these organizations and can then twist them to their own purposes. Thus a society for the preservation of peace can become a body which undermines the strength of those whom the Communists' Russian masters regard as enemies. This is exactly the technique which the U.S.S.R. has followed.

It was adumbrated by Lenin at the Third Congress of the Comintern

in 1921, but it was Willi Münzenburg, the Soviet Astronomer Royal, who first exploited systematically the possibilities of 'sympathetic mass organization'. He began in 1921 with a body called Workers' International Relief, which, he declared 'can take steps which political parties cannot'. His inspiration soon led to the foundation of a large number of bodies such as the Friends of Soviet Russia, the League against Imperialism, and other associations which in an unguarded moment Münzenburg described as Innocents Clubs.

It was not, however, until after the dissolution of the Comintern for tactical reasons in 1943 that this technique of the Innocents Clubs became of first-class importance. The Clubs fell into two categories—International and National—and naturally the sponsors aimed at converting the national associations into docile branches of the world-wide organizations. The most important of the international bodies were the World Peace Council, the World Federation of Trade Unions, and the World Federation of Democratic Youth.

WORLD PEACE COUNCIL

No appeal to a war-weary world could be more effective than the cry for peace, and few of those to whom it was addressed would have read the writings of the followers of Lenin and Stalin, or would have any idea that Communism is based on the belief in violence and destruction. The formation of a World Peace Council was therefore a good bet.

After three years of preparatory work by a group of Communist intellectuals who called themselves the World Committee of the Partisans for Peace, the World Peace Council was inaugurated in Paris in 1951. It was soon expelled from Paris for subversive activities and took refuge in Vienna, then still partially under Soviet control. The Austrian Minister for the Interior objected strongly to its establishment for, he said, the World Peace Council had nothing to do with peace. Shortly after Austria regained her independence, its Vienna offices were closed by the authorities on the grounds that it 'interfered with the internal affairs of countries with which Austria has good and friendly relations'. An offshoot of the Council, known as the International Institute for Peace, was however set up in Vienna to carry on the work previously done by the headquarters organization of the Council. Branch Committees were established in over seventy countries and though Communists predominated in these organizations, many non-Communists joined under the delusion that it was a genuine peace movement. Gradually, however, it

became realized that the real aim of the Council was the defence of Soviet policies and the strengthening of the position in the world of the Communist countries.

Many genuine peace lovers turned away from the Council in disgust. Burma, for example, cannot be suspected of being pro-Western and anti-Communist, and the following extract from *The New Light of Burma* in March 1955 is, therefore, of great interest:

> 'A suspicious step in the activities of the World Peace Council is that all peace movements blindly and unanimously support the political ideology of the Communist countries irrespective of whether it is right or wrong. . . . The strangest fact of all is that all the conferences held by the World Peace Council unquestionably accept the policy and programme of the Soviet Communist Party of the Soviet Government, and, what is more, they disseminate propaganda on its behalf. . . . Another strange thing is that the Communist-dominated World Peace Council pronounces sweet phrases about peace on the one hand, while, on the other, it incites hatred and animosity of the masses in various countries against the States, systems and individuals it dislikes. Such an organization can never be regarded as the hub of a peace movement. It is impairing peace as long as it disseminates the propaganda of peaceful co-existence on the one hand, while, on the other, it mounts a psychological warfare campaign against all countries refusing to comply with its desires.'

In August 1958, *Peace News*, the London pacifist weekly, wrote in a similar strain:

> '. . . The fact of most significance about these meetings . . . is that no delegate from China, Russia, Bulgaria, Hungary—any of the Communist countries—was able to express a point of view at variance with that of his Government. . . . The delegates from all the other countries were so able; most of them who spoke, in fact did so. . . . Some of them made passionate indictments against the policies of their Governments. . . .'

Genuine pacifists no doubt had in mind that pamphlet issued in March 1954 by the Soviet Ministry of Defence, expressing typical Communist scorn of pacifism:

> 'Whilst carrying on a struggle for peace, Communists are not, however, pacifists who sigh for peace and limit themselves to propaganda for peace. They consider that in order to remove the inevitability

of wars, it is necessary to destroy imperialism. Communists link the cause of peace with the cause of the victory of the proletarian revolution, considering that the surest means of doing away with wars and of establishing permanent, just peace is the overthrow of the power of the imperialistic bourgeoisie. The bourgeois-pacifist attitude towards war which stresses the "horrors" of war and inculcates hatred of all wars is alien to us. Communists are against imperialistic wars as being counter-revolutionary wars—but they are in favour of liberating, anti-imperialist, revolutionary wars.'

With their usual flexibility, the Communists have modified their technique in the light of evergrowing suspicions and the peace congresses which they organize from time to time are now generally summoned not by the World Peace Council, but by an *ad hoc* International Preparatory Committee. Similar tactics are adopted in the organization of world-wide propaganda campaigns, based on the collection of signatures in support of some simple appeal. Banning the atom bomb has been a favourite theme for such appeals and not unnaturally has attracted much support from millions of non-Communists.

Of late, the World Peace Council has fallen on difficult days. The arming of the Arab States by the Soviet Union against Israel alienated many of its supporters, while Russian action in Hungary in 1956 created an open split in the Council itself. Russia is, in fact, in a dilemma. If the Council is not supported mainly by non-Communists, it will fail of its purpose; on the other hand if the Communists are in a minority, it is unlikely that the Council will fulfil its object of defending Soviet policies. It is probably safe to say that in its present form the World Peace Council is proving a failure and that the Soviet can achieve far better results from the direct dissemination of ideas likely to confuse the people of Western countries on such subjects as nuclear deterrents and disarmaments.

WORLD FEDERATION OF TRADE UNIONS

The World Federation of Trade Unions provides a classic example of the methods used by the Communists to capture a non-Communist body. In 1943 the British Trade Union Congress made a determined effort to break down the barrier between the two world *blocs*, at least in so far as labour matters were concerned. It issued an invitation for a preparatory conference, which led to the formation of the World Federation of Trade Unions in October 1945. Sir Walter Citrine became the first President of the Federation, but the Communist Secretary-General, Louis Saillant,

soon set to work to inflate the membership of the Communist affiliated unions. Russia's dominance over the labour movement in the countries of Eastern Europe facilitated this task, but the real accession of Communist strength occurred when the Communists came into power in China. The voting power of each affiliated organization depended on its own membership and in most of the countries concerned—particularly so in the case of China—there was no means of checking the figures submitted. By 1948, the Communists were in control and Arthur Deakin stated that 'the World Federation of Trade Unions is rapidly becoming nothing more than another platform and instrument for the furtherance of Soviet policy'. He gave the following figures:

		1945	*1948*
Executive Bureau ..	Communists	4	6
	Non-Communists ..	5	3
Executive Committee ..	Communists	11	14
	Non-Communists ..	11	8
General Council	Communists	26	34
	Non-Communists ..	38	30

In January 1949, the non-Communists withdrew from the Federation and set up the International Federation of Free Trade Unions with its headquarters in Brussels. The British representatives, in reporting this position to the Trades Union Congress in September 1949, put the matter quite simply: 'We started with an honest intention, but we were not dealing with honest men.' A little later the President of the World Federation of Trade Unions was at least sufficiently honest to warn the members that for tactical reasons they must not be labelled Communist or Soviet-run.

The World Federation of Trade Unions, which is now overwhelmingly Communist, claims ninety-five million members, but it has been pointed out that since Trade Unions in Communist countries are largely government agencies, these figures mean little. The aims of the Federation as set out in its constitution are unexceptionable, but in practice most of its energy is devoted to the furtherance of Russian policy in matters outside the sphere of labour. It opposed the Marshall Plan and the European Defence Community; it protested against German rearmament; it encouraged the Algerians in their struggle for independence. These are perfectly legitimate activities for an international body, but to interpret them aright it is necessary to remember that the World Federation of Trade Unions expelled the Yugoslav representative as soon as

Stalin quarrelled with that country; that it refused to criticize the use of troops to compel its own members in East Germany and Poland to discontinue their strikes; and that it fully supported the ruthless Russian suppression of the factory workers in Hungary.

It is interesting to note that in December 1954 the World Federation of Trade Unions proclaimed a charter of trade union rights. It was a satisfactory document, but as hardly any of the rights set forth in it exist in the countries to which the sponsors of the World Federation of Trade Unions belong, it is difficult to take it seriously. An excellent analysis of the contrast between the spirit of the charter and the practice in Communist countries has been published by the International Federation of Free Trade Unions. The authors point out that the last President of the Central Russian Council of Trade Unions was appointed not by the Unions but by the government; that workers in Communist countries have no right to form Unions without permission; that in the U.S.S.R. no Trade Union Congress was held between 1932 and 1949; and that in the constitution of the Soviet Trade Unions there is no reference at all to the defence of the interests of the workers. The main objects of a Trade Union as defined in that constitution are the maximum increase of productivity, the fixation of norms of output and the improvement of the technical qualifications of the workers. There is indeed a reference to the negotiation of collective agreements, but a resolution of the Council of Trade Unions makes it clear that such agreements do not deal with wages at all. Wages are in fact fixed by government. In Czechoslovakia a similar situation prevails and a few years ago, when the Prime Minister was complaining about absenteeism on account of sickness, he said with typical Communist bluntness that 'damage to the health of a worker is not so serious as damage to production'. There is indeed ample evidence from the Communist countries that Trade Unions exist not to protect the worker, but to keep them under rigid government control. The Charter in fact means nothing and it is in fact difficult to disagree with the President of the International Federation of Free Trade Unions, who declared in 1955: 'we regard the World Federation of Trade Unions as a Communist espionage apparatus and one of the arms of the Cominform. We regard it as an enemy of the workers everywhere.'

WORLD FEDERATION OF DEMOCRATIC YOUTH

The history and activities of this body are so closely parallel to that of the World Peace Council and the World Federation of Trade Unions, that

they need not be described in much detail. It was founded in November 1945 at a World Youth Conference, convened by a now defunct Communist Youth Council, but was largely attended by non-Communists who were impressed with the vision of friendship between the youth of all nations and classes. The illusion was soon destroyed, since it became clear that the main object of the new body was pro-Soviet propaganda and in 1949 many of the non-Communists left the Federation and founded the World Assembly of Youth. Some years later, on the invitation of the World Federation of Democratic Youth, the World Assembly of Youth agreed to discuss the possibility of collaboration, but again they came up against the hard core of Communist intransigence and the talks were discontinued.

The World Federation of Democratic Youth has followed the example of the World Peace Council and the World Federation of Trade Unions in opposing the Marshall Plan, preaching anti-colonialism, expelling Yugoslavia when Stalin quarrelled with Tito; and refusing to condemn Russian action to suppress strikes and risings in East Germany, Poland and Hungary. As with those other bodies, it also seeks to deflect suspicion by allowing the arrangements for the biennial World Youth Festival to be made through International Preparatory Committees rather than direct by the Federation itself. Those Congresses are in fact largely devoted to Communist propaganda, to some extent camouflaged behind a lavish display of cultural and sporting activities. A Polish paper wrote frankly in 1955 about the real object of the Warsaw Festival of Youth. 'It must be realized that the festival is not only for song and amusement: it is, above all, a political event on a world-wide scale. . . . We must help the youth to understand the lasting link between their work and the struggle waged by their revolutionary fellows throughout the world . . .'

It is not necessary to describe the many other Communist-sponsored international organizations. They all follow the same pattern—an appeal to idealism, control from Moscow, attacks on the policy of the democracies and defence of Soviet policy. There are signs that the very sameness of the pattern is to some extent defeating its purpose, inasmuch as their propaganda character is thereby made obvious. They are nevertheless an essential part of the Communist plan and are not likely to be discontinued.

BRITISH UNION OF STUDENTS

All these international organizations have, of course, sought to establish member bodies in each of the non-Communist countries. One of the most important efforts has been in the field of education. Soon after the war, in addition to the World Federation of Democratic Youth, which we have already discussed, the U.S.S.R. inspired the formation of the International Union of Students whose offices were in Prague. Both bodies were dominated by the Communists, though this was more obvious in the case of the World Federation of Democratic Youth. The British Union of Students was affiliated to both these organizations, though it is estimated that only about twenty-five per cent of its members were Communist sympathizers. It was compelled by its constitution to eschew politics and at first put up an ineffective plea that a similar restraint should be practised in the parent international body. It received the obvious reply that youth, welfare and politics were inseparable and in 1948 the British Union of Students left the World Federation of Democratic Youth, though remaining a member of the International Union of Students. The Communists in the British Union of Students developed all the arguments most likely to convince non-Communist members that it was their duty to retain their connection with the International Union of Students—they had no right to walk out merely because they were a minority; they could impart to Communist nationals accurate information about conditions in democratic countries; they could serve as a bridge between the East and the West.

For a time the British Union of Students, shocked by the official supervision of the Committee of the Czech National Union of Students in 1948, decided to fight the Communist views in the International Union. Needless to say they were talked down, but the Communists in the British Union still managed to persuade their colleagues not to break with the International Union. This unsatisfactory situation continued for several years and the non-Communist British delegation had to suffer the normal technique of automatic applause of the speeches of Communists and boos and hisses for their opponents. By 1950 the situation had become intolerable, but the Communist element in the British Union were still able to dissuade their colleagues from making a complete break. The Union decided to continue taking part in non-controversial activities and to attend as observers. The International Union would not accept this type of membership and in 1952 the British Union of Students cancelled its affiliation.

After the general relaxation following the death of Stalin, the International Union's constitution was amended and Associate Membership was introduced. The British Union rejoined the parent body and thus consciously or unconsciously gave their support to an organization whose real object was the promulgation of Communism.

THE BRITISH PEACE COMMITTEE

If the success of the Communists in the Student organizations can be called partial, it must be admitted that they have achieved far greater results with the Peace Movement. The British Committee was formed in 1948 and in 1950 Attlee, then Prime Minister, stated categorically that ninety per cent of the Committee were Communists or fellow-travellers and that one of their objects laid down by the Cominform, was to encourage evasion of military service by the youth of Britain and other countries.

There are also half a dozen or so 'peace organizations' in the professions, linked vaguely with the British Peace Committee, and controlled by the Joint Council of the Arts and Sciences for Peace. Their aims are no doubt genuine, but it is important to notice that they are in the main Communist run and it is worthwhile remembering what Pollitt said just after the Warsaw Peace Conference in 1950. 'We are therefore going to ask every Communist not only to do more for peace, but to do more for winning from the circles in which they move new members for the Communist Party. We are always telling the industrial workers in our Party that the test of all their work is the number of . . . new members for the Communist Party they make. This applies with equal force to the members of our Party who are working in the professional field. For the greater the strength of our Party, the greater becomes the strength of the peace movement.'

Aneurin Bevan rightly described the Communist dove of peace as 'a fake, a clay pigeon, a decoy duck—an attempt to divert the attention of the working class of the Western World from what is really happening'.

SOCIETIES FOR CULTURAL RELATIONS

Even more important than these Peace organizations are the numerous societies for the promotion of friendship and cultural relations between Britain and the U.S.S.R. Perhaps the most important leaders in this complex of associations have been D. N. Pritt, the Dean of Canterbury,

whose political views are well known, Tom Bell, then a leading Communist official, W. Paul, the editor of a former Communist weekly, *The Sunday Worker*, and John Horner who was at that time an enthusiastic Communist. D. N. Pritt, who is not himself a Communist, has always had an affection for Russia and in an address to the Society for Cultural Relations with Russia spoke with gratitude of the new conception that Stalin had given to the world of the value of the human being, the dignity of man and of the wide cultural and educational development based on Socialist security. Few of us—and certainly not the present writer—can compete with D. N. Pritt in intellectual ability or capacity to analyse 'culture'—but the ordinary man would find it difficult to reconcile Pritt's noble conception with Soviet purges and murders on a scale unparalleled in the modern world.

Unlike D. N. Pritt, Sir Will Lowther, who had for long been a firm believer in British-Czechoslovak friendship, resigned from the Presidency of the British-Czechoslovak Friendship Society because it had 'descended to being nothing more than the stooge of the Cominform'. Readers must take their choice between the judgment of D. N. Pritt and that of Sir Will Lowther.

The British-Hungarian Friendship Society was perhaps the most impressively sponsored of all these bodies. John Horner, the Dean of Canterbury and D. N. Pritt all shared the platform in its inaugural meeting and with this strong intellectual backing, the Society's delegation to Hungary in 1953 wrote a vivid description of the way in which the Hungarian workers enjoyed democratic rights and a good standard of living. John Horner realized three years later how cruelly he had been misled and when he resigned from the Communist Party he said bravely, as an honest man, 'I feel I have been responsible for propagating in advance policies which have produced this later tragedy (in Hungary).'

There were dozens of associations of this kind. They appealed to the kindly instinct of ordinary folk who had no idea that the Communists shared Hitler's contempt for those who longed for peace.

INFILTRATION

In Britain and some other democratic countries, direct methods bring the Communists little success and even satellite bodies lose their influence once their Moscow origin is realized. Altogether more subtle is the policy of infiltration into Trade Unions and similar bodies. The aim is not necessarily to secure a majority of Communist members, but to dominate

the Union behind the scenes, so that non-Communist members will not be aware of what is happening. Bob Darke, to whom reference has already been made, has written a vivid description of the technique of infiltration on which the following account is largely based.

Every Communist industrial worker is under an obligation to belong to a trade union and to attend its meetings. The Communist members of a particular Union Branch are known as a 'fraction' and Darke tells us that the members of the fraction are under an iron discipline, 'they must place attendance at fraction meetings above all other calls, even personal affairs like bereavement'. At these meetings every item on the agenda of the next Union Branch meeting is fully discussed, not only as to its substance, but also as to the tactics to be followed in dealing with it. The fraction meets at least once a fortnight and its members are thus always well prepared. One of their main tasks is to secure the election of Communist office-bearers—Chairman, Secretary or Treasurer. In this task they are helped by the fact that the Communists attend all Branch meetings and stay to the end. They are willing to undertake the routine duties that most members want to avoid. They have also developed to a fine art the practice of keeping a meeting going until the time is propitious for a vote. 'Communists know', says Darke, 'that if they keep a meeting going long enough, prolonging tedious discussion on an unimportant matter, the resistance of their opponents will be weakened, the anti-Communists will pick up their hats and move off to the pub before it closes. Then is the moment for the fraction to strike, to swing through its own measures as rapidly as possible.' If they can secure the election of a Communist as Chairman or Secretary, these tactics are of course greatly facilitated, but it is almost equally important to have a Party member as Treasurer. He will then propose and approve grants to any cause deemed worthy of Communist support, and the other members will seldom bother to oppose his proposals.

Once the control of the Union Branch has been captured, the Party will make a similar bid at District level—and this may be an easier task, since relatively few members bother to attend District meetings. Control of the District Committee is particularly important, since it is here that the main local executive functions are performed, and it does not take a Communist Secretary long to ensure that all the main posts are in Communist hands.

Although for convenience the description of this technique of rigging meetings and elections has been based on Darke's *The Communist Technique in Britain*, it is corroborated by the evidence of many other

prominent Trade Unionists. Victor Feather, for example, in *How Do The Communists Work*, gives an excellent description of the proceedings at a particular Branch meeting of the Union, which is worth summarizing. A Communist member, with the assistance of a Communist Chairman, delayed the start of the proceedings on the ground that a group was expected from a nearby factory. Members of the fraction then queried the minutes at great length and thereafter raised endless unimportant questions of procedure. Several items of correspondence were then made to last a long time, after which lengthy discussion took place on the Korean war. By 10 p.m., only nineteen of the members originally present remained, and Victor Feather points out that in that particular District, last buses go at 10.20 p.m. and pubs close at 10 p.m. Under Standing Orders meetings must end at 10 p.m., but the rule was suspended so that the Branch delegate to the annual conference could be elected after the disappearance of the non-Communist workers. 'A non-Communist proposed the Secretary and this was seconded. A fellow-traveller proposed one of the Communists and this found a seconder. Another Communist proposed yet a third candidate, and a fellow-traveller seconded.

'When the vote was taken neither of them voted for this third nominee. They both voted for the Communist. He got eight votes, the full muster of known Communists and fellow-travellers in the branch. The Secretary got seven. The third nominee got two. The Chairman and Secretary did not vote.

'That was how the branch came to be represented at the conference by a Communist Party member. And a lot more branches were the same. It was a tight squeeze for the Communist Party, but they'd done it. How?

'Like the man in the well-known advertisement who got the job the night before the interview, they, too, had done the job the night before the meeting.'

Once the Branch and District organizations have been captured, the ground is well prepared for intensive work in individual factories, and here of course the main aim is to secure the appointment of Communist shop stewards. The tactics adopted are similar to those described above and Darke tells us of a factory of two thousand workers in which there were only thirty Party members, but where nevertheless six of the twelve shop stewards were Communists. Apart from the many other ways in which shop stewards can further the Communist cause, it is often not difficult for them to get rid of active anti-Communist workers. It is easier still for them to intimidate the less courageous employees. Thus a small, determined minority are able to dominate the Branch, the District,

the factories, the Shop Stewards and many other important sections of the Trade Union movement, most of whose members dislike Communism intensely when they think about it at all. This, unfortunately, is not very often, and so it came to pass that in Hackney, where the Communist-members of the Trade Unions have never exceeded a hundred and fifty, twenty-eight out of thirty-five Union branches were at one time largely Communist-controlled.

The importance of the Unions to the Communists arises in three ways. First, according to orthodox theory, the proletariat is to be the Marxist army; secondly, Unions count for a great deal in the formation of the policy of the Labour Party; and, thirdly, Soviet foreign policy demands that the Communists should be able to hamper industrial production in the democratic countries. It is indeed not surprising that the Communists seek to control the Unions. What is surprising is that in some Unions the overwhelming majority of non-Communists should allow this to happen.

For convenience we have illustrated Communist technique by reference to British institutions, but the same operations have been conducted on a larger scale in the U.S.A. From about 1912, the Communists in that country set to work to penetrate into the American Federation of Labour Unions and under the able guidance of William Z. Foster, they succeeded remarkably well. When the Congress of Industrial Organizations was established in 1936 in opposition to the American Federation of Labour, the Communists switched their allegiance to the new body. Within a few years they controlled thirteen important C.I.O. unions. They managed to instal a few chosen henchmen in the central office of the C.I.O. but when the 'cold war' began, strong anti-Soviet feeling enabled the C.I.O to get rid of officials with Communist sympathies. The same wave of anti-Communist feeling led the C.I.O. to contemplate expulsion of the powerful United Electric Radio and Machine Union which the Communists had captured. That Union saved themselves from this ignominy by dropping its affiliation to the C.I.O. The rival non-Communist Union established by the C.I.O. was not altogether successful.

We have already quoted from Otto Friedman's description of the corresponding technique in Czechoslovakia. The same type of operation has been conducted in many of the other non-Communist countries and it can safely be said that infiltration, not only in the industrial Unions, but also into bodies of men such as teachers holding key posts, is the most powerful weapon in the Communist armoury today.

XV

Communism and the Individual—Case Histories

SO FAR we have discussed Communism in general terms. It remains to consider its impact on the individual and fortunately many studies of this subject by past and present Communists are available. We shall select four of them, written respectively by a Hungarian intellectual, a middle-class Englishman, an Englishman of the working classes and a Russian, all of whom at one time held important positions in the Party.

Arthur Koestler, one of the most thought-provoking writers of our day, was born in Budapest in 1905, and the formative years of his adolescence thus fell in the very disturbed years after the First World War. His temperament was such that in any age he would have been a seeker after Utopia. It was his lot, as he tells us in *Arrow in the Blue* to be born when the place of God in our civilization was vacant, while Reason had also been dethroned—'an age of disillusionment and an age of longing'.

The dislocation of life caused by the War and the fantastic inflation of the early twenties destroyed the middle classes of Central Europe and ushered in 'the beginning of the end of civilized life along the Danube and the Rhine'. The disorders in Italy which led to the rise of Mussolini; the reactionary Horthy régime in Hungary; the inability of the Socialists in Germany either to cope with the economic chaos or to deal with the needs of the working classes—all seemed to indicate the bankruptcy of democracy and to pave the way for totalitarianism. When in 1930 the Communists in Germany allied themselves with the Nazis against the Socialists, it must indeed have seemed to many Central Europeans that for the future the choice lay only between the Communists and the Nazis. On their record, as then known to the outside world, a reasonable man might well have given the preference to the Communists.

Koestler was a natural rebel, and indeed he confesses that ever since childhood he has 'lived in a state of Chronic Indignation'—now against one injustice, now against another. At the impressionable age of fourteen he was thrilled with the dignity and discipline of the Communists in Hungary and was readily receptive to propaganda demanding the distribution to the peasants of the vast domains of the landlords. Young as he was, The Hundred Days of the Hungarian Commune left a deep mark on him.

The same Chronic Indignation led him some years later to be caught up in the Zionist movement and to work as an agricultural labourer in collective settlements in Palestine. It displayed itself again, when anger at the American destruction of surplus foodstuffs at a time of food shortage in many countries pushed him a long way towards Communism. Russia attracted him greatly and even before he joined the Party he volunteered unsuccessfully to go to that country as a tractor driver. It is not surprising, therefore, that though he had read Communist literature considerably, his conversion to Communism should have had about it something of the character of a religious experience. Let us recount it in his own words. 'By the time I had finished with Engels' *Feuerbach* and Lenin's *State and Revolution*, something had clicked in my brain and I was shaken by a mental explosion. To say that one had "seen the light" is a poor description of the intellectual rapture which only the convert knows (regardless to what faith he has been converted). The new light seems to pour from all directions across the skull; the whole universe falls into pattern like the stray pieces in a jigsaw puzzle assembled by magic at one stroke. There is now an answer to every question; doubts and conflicts are a matter of the tortured past—a past already remote, when one had lived in dismal ignorance in the tasteless, colourless world of those who *don't know*. Nothing henceforth can disturb the convert's inner peace and serenity—except the occasional fear of losing faith again, losing thereby what alone makes life worth living, and falling back into the outer darkness, where there is wailing and gnashing of teeth.'

Koestler was nevertheless able to analyse the logical reasons underlying his 'conversion' and perhaps the most potent of them was the revolt against injustice. The social evils of the capitalist system were obvious and moreover that system appeared to be breaking down. The full horrors of Stalinism had not yet unfolded themselves to the outside world and to a young idealist the appeal of the Internationale* was tremendous.

'To wipe out the past for ever
O army of slaves, follow us.
We shall lift the globe from its axis.
We are nothing, we shall be all.'

A second factor was admiration for the First Russian Five Year Plan and for the rapid transformation of Russia into an industrial country which it implied. The emotional impact of the Plan on an ardent young spirit was well described by Koestler in words which he puts into the

* Hungarian version as quoted by Koestler.

mouth of a Russian boy. 'The announcement of the First Five Year Plan came like the sudden roar of thunder which shook the country and whose echo reverberated throughout the world. The ship of the Revolution had been becalmed; now it shot forward as under a whip, with cracking masts and sails stretched to bursting. . . . Discipline in school became stricter; each class, the teacher explained, was to regard itself as a shock battalion in the battle for the future. Fedya's head buzzed with the figures of the Plan, learned by rote: so many million tons of pig iron after the first year, so many million kilowatt hours, so many million illiterates turned into cultured members of society. The sound of all these millions of riches, produced by the people for the people, was intoxicating. The kilowatt hours, the tons, bushels, gallons and kilometres became characters in a heroic saga. . . .'

The impact of this great development was all the greater because it coincided with the worst economic crisis that the West had known. There was a parallel too in the psychological sphere. Men in the West seemed to have lost faith in the future—what a contrast to the spirit of the Russian planners.

A third factor, which has already been mentioned but which must be included here for the sake of completeness, was the conviction that Communism was the only alternative to Fascism. European liberalism appeared dead as a doornail.

Apart from these logical considerations, Communism had many emotional attractions for the young and for those who were groping for a new faith. Koestler describes the satisfaction of stepping into 'an intellectually closed world . . .' 'A system which claims to explain all phenomena under the sun and to have a cure for all that ails man . . . that refuses to be modified by newly observed facts but has sufficiently elastic defences to . . . make them fit the required pattern.' It is not difficult to understand the comfort to be derived from dialectical materialism in an age without faith, and if at times the philosophy seems dull and monotonous, it is at least enlivened by the secrecy with which the system is surrounded. 'Part of the proselytizing Communist attraction,' says Koestler, 'rests in the secrecy which surrounds his person. He is only known by his first name, or by an alias. He has no address and can only be reached through intermediaries. . . . Even a superficial contact will make the innocent outsider feel that members of the Party lead a life apart from society, steeped in mystery, danger and constant sacrifice.'

The cult of secrecy originated, of course, in sheer necessity when the Party was illegal, but there are the strongest psychological reasons for

maintaining it. Allied to it is the existence of a majestic Party hierarchy. The ordinary Party member only comes into contact with the lower levels of the organization, but he hears with awe, the names of the immortals, and many Communist writers have described the feelings, compounded of fear and reverence, with which they have entered the presence of one of the immediate associates of Stalin.

The young man thus joins the Party in a mood of exaltation. Since the Party can explain everything by reference to the dialectics, there is no need for him to exercise his critical faculties and he will indeed soon discover that it is unwise to do so. Unless he is an unusually strong character, those faculties will soon become atrophied. He will then in time cease to be shocked either at the grovelling self-abasement of Party members before authority, or at the rejection of all moral restraint, or at the disloyalty to wife, parents or children that he may be expected to practice in the interest of the Party. If disillusionment does come, it will be a slow process and he will fight against it for a long time. A man does not readily surrender the comfort of a closed system.

Douglas Hyde was a man with a very different background from that of Koestler. He belonged to what the Communists would call a 'petty bourgeois family in Britain' and was brought up in a strict nonconformist atmosphere. After the common adolescent phase of agnosticism, he felt the 'call' and began to study for the Ministry, while working as a dental apprentice. His studies for the Ministry were greatly disturbed by thoughts about social injustice. At an early age he had been horrified at what he felt to be the unjust treatment of the Italian emigrés executed in America and in 1927, boy as he was, he joined the International Class War Prisoners Aid, which was in fact a Communist-controlled organization. He soon began to be worried by the 'respectability' of many of his fellow churchgoers—their indifference to social injustice and what he felt to be the lack of any Christian message for the down and outs and the poor.

In his study of religion he became interested in Indian mysticism. This brought him into contact with the India League and he readily accepted what he was told about British exploitation in India and the like.

His doubts as to the humanitarianism of practising Christians, and his feelings about colonialism, naturally threw him into Communist company, but he was still worried about the strong atheistic element in Communist teachings. At the same time he was to some extent lulled by the writing of a Quaker who taught that Bolshevism had inculcated in the Russian people a new sense of integrity and a higher social morality, and

was in fact preparing the way for a purified Christianity. This interpretation would doubtless have amused Stalin, but it is only fair to remember that it was made before the worst evils of the Stalin era occurred, and before the world at large knew much about what was happening in Russia.

Three other factors now influenced young Hyde. The first was the misery of mass unemployment and the apparent indifference to it of the 'respectable classes'; the second was the attraction of the Communist Peace Campaign, and the argument that if the workers of the world turned the next war into a civil war, that would in fact mean the end of war for all time. The third factor was the influence of the works of William Morris. That great artist and writer made Communism seem colourful and held out shining visions of the future. 'Man's leisure would increase until at last he had more leisure hours by far than those required to assist the machine to do the hum-drum but necessary jobs for the community.

'From this would come the desire and opportunity to use that leisure well; every man and woman would become an artist-craftsman and, as aesthetic standards rose, none would be content with anything which was mass-produced if it could possibly be made by his own effort.

'There would be a great blossoming of the arts, with the common people themselves producing things to compare with the glories left to us by the medieval craftsmen. Communism in practice would in fact lead to a great outpouring of the human soul.'

Hyde was clearly coming nearer to the Communist faith, but he was still worried about the Party rejection of common morality, particularly in regard to sex. The usual Marxist explanations were given to him, but a stronger compulsive force was exerted by his resentment at the probably necessary action taken by the police against unemployed rioters in Bristol. Class anger was now a potent factor.

By this time his Christianity had been replaced by hatred and though he still continued to preach occasionally, his sermons were mainly a vehicle for Communist propaganda. He had a curious experience one day when he visited a Sunday school and a Christian boy said, in disgust, 'It's daft getting him along. He's got all the answers and we haven't.' There can be little doubt that the lack of positive teaching by the Protestant churches at this time on many important subjects created a great sense of emptiness in the hearts of some of their followers, and the positiveness of Communism appealed to them. It is nevertheless a very terrifying thought that a man of such sincerity and good will as Hyde should have

brought himself to say 'What we need is a jolly good healthy hate'. It is this combination of idealism with the most primitive human feelings that makes Communism both sinister and baffling. In *I Believed*, Hyde explains that the strength of Communism lies in its ability to 'take hatred, desire for retribution by those who have been ill used, youthful idealism and the desire for a cleaner world and then to harness all these powerful horses to its chariot'.

Hyde's book is of absorbing interest where it deals with the tactics of infiltration into the Labour Party, the plans—before Russia's entry into the Second World War—for sabotage of the British war effort, the division of the Party into its legal and illegal sections, and the fact that the Communists gained influence in Trade Unions and similar bodies because nobody else would bother. These matters have already been discussed and we must not dwell on them again. Two points from *I Believed* must, however, be made. The first is that the Communists derived their strength from the certainty of ultimate victory. Nothing could make this as clear as the following extract from this interesting book, where Hyde is dealing with his trial on a criminal charge. 'Once, in the excitement of cross-examining the inspector, I referred to him as "the prisoner". The kindly, octogenarian chairman of the Magistrates' Bench leaned forward and explained: "He's not the prisoner, he is the witness. *You* are the prisoner." "I am today," was my reply, "but one day *he* will be the prisoner".'

'And I believed it. It is that certainty of ultimate victory, bringing with it both the realization of dreams and the possibility of retribution, which accounts for a good deal of the aggressive self-confidence of the Communist. "You can hate me, persecute me, do what you like with me," he says through his clenched teeth. "One day we shall have our Revolution and our Soviet Britain and God help you when that day comes".'

The second point is the incredible devotion of the Communist rank and file. This is sufficiently important to justify another extensive quotation from Douglas Hyde, who at one time during the Second World War was one of the persons responsible for arranging the distribution of the *Daily Worker*.

'And there was Jimmie. Jimmie was doing a similar job at the big war factory at which he worked near his home in Essex. Then he was called up. Going to join his unit he fell under an oncoming train and lost a leg. He was nineteen years of age.

'When he came out of hospital, still very ill and with an artificial limb which did not fit, he learned that he would get no Army pension, no compensation. He had not only fallen beneath a train, he had somehow

managed to fall between being technically a civilian and officially a serviceman.

'He went back to his former place of work, this time as a watchman. But he proceeded to re-establish all his former contacts and to build up all the old *Daily Worker* sales.

'Early each morning he went off on his crutches to collect an enormously heavy bundle of papers and then got them around to his network of sellers.

'Then came the air-raids of London and trains became less regular. Sometimes his beloved parcel of *Daily Workers* failed to arrive and he would phone me, desperately pleading with me to get another parcel despatched and so ensure that his readers should not be let down. But, with bombs dropping nightly on the line between London and his local station, the number of occasions on which no parcel arrived became more frequent. He could stand it no longer.

'He bought an old bicycle with a fixed wheel, had one pedal removed so that his artificial limb could hang free, and cycled at night through the blitz to the *Daily Worker* building. His course lay right down the Thames waterfront, which was a regular target for the Nazi bombers. In the black-out and at the height of the blitz, through the whole of dockland, right through the East End, he came. When he arrived on the first night his face was grey.

'As he came through the door the night sky to the East from where he had come glowed red with dockland fires and thud after thud of falling bombs sounded dully from the same direction. Anti-aircraft flak sprinkled skies and streets.

'On either side of his body he had a great rucksack strapped, and another on the back of his cycle. We filled all three with his precious papers and he set off—East, the way he had come, cycling back through the night with his one leg and his huge burden. The workers in his factory did not again miss their *Daily Worker* until the day the paper was banned and Jimmie's job was for the time suspended.'

It is this kind of spirit that compels one to regard Communism as a religion. Its god may be Satan, but people believe in it and their best friends are those of us today who believe in nothing. A modern writer has said that whereas conversion is an instantaneous process, loss of faith occurs only over a long period. This was certainly so with Douglas Hyde. There was no dramatic discovery that he had been worshipping false gods. Gradually he realized that he had surrendered his judgment. 'I longed to think independently, and yet how far away it all seemed. It

would mean an abandonment of the class struggle, a betrayal of all I had lived for. It was a luxury belonging to the past, to days when revolution was not on the order of the day, to the quiet periods which interleave those of revolutionary change.'

Hyde had come to feel that after the misery of the War, the world had had enough of class war and hatred. Above all, he craved for the right to be once again an individual. In the end he broke loose and regained his freedom. His reflections thereafter are of great importance. 'The majority who come to Communism do so because, in the first instance, they are subconsciously looking for a cause which can fill the void left by unbelief, or as in my own case, an insecurely held belief which is failing to satisfy them intellectually and spiritually.'

In many cases it is the idealist who becomes the Communist, but once he has become a 'steel-hardened cadre' there are for him 'no spiritual values, no moral or ethical consideration . . .' 'No human compassion influences his Marxist judgment, neither love nor pity nor patriotism has any room in his make up, nor has truth or honour, except within his immediate circle of comrades. Conscience has become something which prompts him to lie, to deceive, to betray.'

Bob Darke, for long a Communist leader in the working-class district of Hackney, in London, was a very different character from Koestler, the philosopher, or Hyde, the middle-class convert. He was the type of Communist who appeals most to British people—a man who continues to live as one of the working classes even after he has become a Party official. The impulses that moved him were nevertheless not very different from those which led Hyde to join the Party. The strongest of them was profound dissatisfaction with the misery resulting from unemployment and the apparent inability of the Government to do anything about it. Before he became a Communist, Darke was Chairman of the local branch of the National Unemployed Workers' Movement—and he did not even know at that time that it was Communist controlled. What he did know was that unemployment was a soul-destroying disease that undermined the self-respect of the individual and corroded society. Something drastic had to be done and though nobody knew what the remedy was, thoughtful men like Darke felt that the powers that be were not looking for it very hard.

In his book *Communist Technique in Britain*, written after his resignation from the Party, he tells us what led him to be a Communist. 'I joined the Party because I could no longer tolerate a system which I believed to be bad. . . . I wanted to work for the improvement of society, for freedom,

justice, progress, and the full expression of Man's talent and ability!' A subsidiary motive was his hatred of Fascism, which, to him as to Koestler, seemed the only alternative to Communism.

After joining the Party he soon made several discoveries. The first was that it was essentially authoritarian. 'Amongst the ordinary members of the Party', he tells us, 'there is a fanatical worship of leading Communists British and Russian. . . . When an abrupt reversal of the Party line has meant that all comrades would deny themselves thrice in the market place, I have never heard one of them suggest openly that perhaps the Executive has been guilty of a mistake.' The leaders are in fact never wrong.

His second discovery was that it was this belief that the Party was always right that gave them their strength. 'There was never an element of doubt in our discussions. . . . May the Lord help us, we were so right and the rest of the world so wrong.'

He then found out how heavy the obligations of a Party member were. If you were an official, you had to make do with little sleep and your family life counted for nothing. If you wife objected or would not become a Communist, obviously you must leave her—a solution which presented no moral problems, since inside the Party immorality was regarded according to Darke as 'a realistic solution to the problem'. No sensible person would suggest that immorality is confined to the Communists, but they are the only party in most European countries that frankly regard it as of no importance.

Having joined the Party, he soon stopped asking his superiors Why, and gave his whole attention to executive work. This involved identifying oneself with other interests—in his case the Borough Council—and recognizing that nothing in that sphere was too trivial for attention. The campaign to secure a cycle track for the Hackney Cycle Speedway Club —the campaign against higher Council rents—all such controversies gave the Communist an opportunity to gain the confidence of the workers. The incentive which inspired the Party was the belief that they were thereby bringing the Revolution nearer, and though there were many members who—unlike Bob Darke—cared little about the welfare of the workers for its own sake, they were all concerned with the triumph of Communism.

Darke has much that is interesting to say on the question of subordination of everything to the Party. He refers to the self-discipline expected in the Communist and says frankly that 'the self-disciplined Communist is one who purges himself of all genuine self-criticism, all honest and

refreshing doubts, all tolerance and independence of thought. . . .' 'I've often witnessed', says Darke, 'a disciplinary committee telling an offender that perfectly honest and decent statements made by him are, in terms of Marxist thought, rank heresy. I have seen him accepting that interpretation because his faith in the Marxism he does not understand is stronger than reason.' This statement is all the more convincing because it comes from one who did not pretend to be an intellectual.

In spite of Darke's loyalty and devotion to the Party, doubts grew. He began to realize that 'Party membership does something to your sense of values, your sense of family responsibility, sweeping and twisting them into the idealogical struggle so that after a while you begin to see your wife's perhaps reasonable complaints as mere capitalist weakness'. In view of the innumerable occasions on which Communist meetings were held in a member's house it is not surprising that her complaints could often be described as reasonable, and it is likely that Ann Darke's feelings helped to induce doubt in Bob Darke's mind. Far more important than this, however, was the fact of his growing resentment at having no right to form views for himself. In Hackney he might be the boss, but in London he was treated almost like an office boy.

The immediate cause of Darke's breach with the Party was his patriotic pride. It is true that he moved a Trade Council resolution demanding the withdrawal of British troops from Korea—but while the Communist half of him did this, the other, British half was stirred with pride at the magnificent stand of the Gloucesters in Korea. When his fellow Communists called these men 'imperialist mercenaries' and 'capitalist lackeys', Darke was finished with Communism.

He had joined the Party out of a fine sense of anger at Social injustice. He left it because he had found that injustice permeated the Party through and through.

It seems worthwhile to round off our study by considering briefly the life of a Russian Communist. Victor Kravchenko's father was one of the old revolutionaries of 1905, who had spent years in jail or as a fugitive, but who told his son bluntly that 'he had no stomach for dictatorship and terror, even under a red flag'. He welcomed the revolution of February 1917, for now, he exclaimed, 'people will be free'. Disillusionment lay ahead.

After a short time as a member of one of the newly formed village communes, young Kravchenko was apprenticed to a locksmith in Korbin. His energies were divided between his work and attending Communist lectures, and before long he was torn between his father's old-fashioned

idealism and what seemed to him to be the new, dynamic force of Communism.

The great famine in 1921 gave a new urgency to economic development and in the following year Kravchenko could not resist the call to help in the mines—the call to ensure a better life for the country. He soon fell in with an idealistic and highly intelligent young Communist who taught him the theory of Communism and persuaded him to join the Comsomol or Communist Youth. It seemed clear to Kravchenko that a better future was on the way for Russia and he jumped at the chance of becoming editor of the newspaper in the factory where he worked, in the belief that he could bring that future nearer. 'Today's pain was only the necessary payment for the glorious future awaiting the country and its people.'

In 1929, at the age of twenty-four, he was admitted to the Party. It seemed to him the greatest event of his life. 'I was no longer an individual with a free choice of friends, interests, views. I was dedicated forever to an idea and a cause. I was a soldier in a highly disciplined army in which obedience to the Centre was the first and almost sole virtue.'

As a man of much above average intelligence, he was soon picked out for training as an engineer. It is interesting to read that in the Technical Institute at Kharkov the students were a very serious-minded body and that the aim of the Institute was to turn out not just engineers, but Soviet-minded engineers. Marxism and the Calculus were of equal importance and indeed Kravchenko goes so far as to say that 'those who could not digest Marx's *Das Kapital* . . . were thrown out of the Institute more quickly than those who had trouble with Calculus or blueprints'.

Before his course of training was completed, he was transferred to a metallurgical factory. Here, in the course of falling in love, he learned a lot about the vast gap of luxury separating the leaders from the masses, and he saw something of the great battles amongst the rulers of Soviet Russia for the possession of a country house outside Moscow or some other amenity. He learned, too, that espionage was an essential part of the Communist system and in some strange way was not only compatible with, but an element in, Party democracy.

This was the period when 'equality of income, which had been a Soviet idea, was suddenly turned into a crime'. Kravchenko soon had practical experience of the meaning of inequality when he was sent to a rural area to assist in forcing the peasants to join collectives. The Party's instructions were simple and wicked. 'You must assume your duties with a feeling of the strictest Party responsibility, without whimpering, without

any rotten liberalism. Throw your bourgeois humanitarianism out of the window and act like Bolsheviks worthy of Comrade Stalin.' Kravchenko was temperamentally incapable of acting in accordance with this injunction. The spectacle of peasants being torn away from their families to work in far distant lumber camps or irrigation works, or of women, on the verge of starvation, cooking horse manure and weeds was too much for him. Again he was instructed to put aside bourgeois pity, but when he was able to show that without more food the peasants would be physically incapable of delivering the grain demanded of them, prudence led the higher authorities to sanction what humanity would not grant. To secure even this prudential decision, however, he had to go to the top of the organization, and in the process made such enemies of his immediate superiors as to prepare the way for endless Party persecution of himself in the years to come. Those over whom he had appealed to Caesar soon took care to have his activities investigated by the N.K.V.D. or security police, and even though he went on from one responsible post to another he was dogged for years by the attentions of that body.

His experience in the villages sowed in his mind the first seeds of doubt regarding the Communist régime. Party discipline, however, still had him in its grip and he brushed aside his doubts much as a young Christian will try to suppress the first stirrings of agnosticism. Moreover, the first great Purge was at hand, and to doubt was to court danger or death. Prudence did not save him from long-drawn-out persecution over a long period and this lends interest to his statement that there was no comparison between the tyranny of the Secret Police under the Tsar and the devilish cleverness of the N.K.V.D.

The doubts sown in his mind were strengthened by his experience, as a factory manager, of the slave labour system. Its inhumanity shocked him, and he was appalled to hear an officer apologizing for shortage of labour, defending himself by stating that 'the plan for imprisonment has not been fulfilled'. The outside world knows far too little about these slave labour camps, and in spite of the evidence, probably few people outside Russia would believe that during the Second World War large numbers of the inhabitants of the camps were machine-gunned so that they should not provide labour for the advancing Germans.

Fortunately for his soul, Kravchenko was not tough enough to look on unmoved at these acts of barbarism. It is not surprising that the great Purge of 1936–8 shook his faith in the Stalin régime, and led him, some years afterwards to say that in these matters 'Genghis Khan was an amateur, a muddler, compared with Stalin.'

In due course he attained a position of some importance in the industrial bureaucracy and had access to many private instructions. He was thus able to learn how unscrupulous the Soviet leaders were in putting out for the public a line which had no relation to their real policy. He tells us, for example, that the disbandment of the Comintern and the professed retreat from Leninism during the War was stated quite frankly by the Party leaders to be intended merely to hoodwink the outside world. Similarly the relaxation of the Communist attitude towards religion was meant only as a tactical move, which, said the powerful Mironov 'will be valuable in smashing the anti-Soviet propaganda of the Roman Catholics, Lutheran and other religious groups'. No good Communist's conscience was troubled by these prevarications. The end justified the means and only 'weaklings' like Kravchenko felt scruples about it.

Kravchenko's scruples nevertheless grew, and when he was sent on a war-time mission to the U.S.A., he took the opportunity to leave the Party and settle down permanently in the free world. Loyalty to the Allied cause and to his country led him to exercise restraint in the statement he issued during war-time, but when the War was over and he could write more freely, he unburdened himself as follows. 'The people of my country are in the clutches of the police state. . . . The world dare not continue indefinitely to turn its back on the martyrdom of a great segment of the human race. . . . That segment is ruled by a deified group of leaders resting on the Party apparatus of the Politburo in a gigantic police force. The hundreds of millions of people of the U.S.S.R. have no voice in shaping their own destiny and are completely cut off from the peoples and the streams of thought in all other countries.'

We have examined the reactions of four men, from three different countries, to the Communist régime in which they for a long time believed. We need only add that their books have the stamp of honesty on the face of them and that the writers experienced great distress in breaking with the Party. They had joined because they were idealists and they left the Party for the same reason.

Conclusion

ANY ACCOUNT of Communism must resemble a description of what is seen in a kaleidoscope. The outward form changes continually, but the elements of which the pattern is formed remain constant. Karl Marx might not recognize Communism in its modern Russian shape, but it has in fact been conditioned from the start by his teaching. Lenin, Stalin and Khrushchev have, however, given Marxism a new, practical twist. They have abandoned the idea that the State will wither away; they have rejected the principle of 'to each according to his needs' in favour of a deliberate encouragement of economic inequality; and they have established a narrow oligarchy which would have made the authors of the Communist Manifesto shudder. The workers may have had nothing to lose but their chains, but they have not lost them.

Nevertheless the hard core of the Marxist philosophy is unchanged. Materialism in its crudest form underlies all modern Communist thought. Religion is still regarded as an unnecessary and even undesirable opiate of the masses; art and literature are only of value in so far as they support the purposes of the State; and economic progress remains the sole criterion of value. The Marxist doctrine of the class war has been extended to the international sphere and though prudential considerations have led Russia—but not China—to accept co-existence as a present necessity, the long term aim of Communist domination of the world has never been abandoned. It was made very clear at the conference of eighty-one Communist Parties in Moscow in November 1960, that on this point the difference between China and Russia was purely one of tactics and timing.

If Communist teaching contained nothing but these somewhat repellent doctrines, it is unlikely that it would have galvanized men into activity or have become one of the most powerful motive forces in the modern world. It is indeed one of the ironies of history that Communism, founded as it is on a grossly materialistic philosophy, has been able to make use of simple idealism. Marx himself had a split mind. As a philosopher he was actuated by a soulless, materialistic view of life; as a man he was horrified at the condition of the working classes in his day, so vividly described by Engels. Those conditions were passing rapidly even when Engels wrote about them, but they gave to the Marxist teaching a

powerful impulse. The appeal to all men to destroy once and for all the social injustices to which capitalism had given rise was stirring. Together with the belief that capitalism was outworn and must be destroyed because the forces of production had achieved their maximum possible development, it produced that strange blend of idealism and materialism which has been the secret of the power of Communism ever since. What may be called natural Communists were attracted by dialectical materialism and its doctrine of the inevitability of the destruction of capitalism, while simpler men were delighted to find a Party apparently dedicated to the abolition of the injustices suffered by the poor.

A crusading spirit was engendered—and all history shows how easily crusaders become narrowly intolerant and indifferent to the sufferings of the enemy, even when they are restrained by respect for the moral law and the principles of chivalry. Communism deliberately rejects such restraints and pours contempt on 'bourgeois morality'. There is no limit, therefore, to the injustice that may be inflicted on the opponents of the revolution.

The idealists could thus, with a good conscience, join with the pure materialists of the Party in persecuting the 'enemies of the People' to whatever extent might be necessary in order to save the revolution. The State—which has become a kind of mystic entity, existing almost independently of the individuals composing it—could do no wrong in the pursuit of its Communist aim.

After the nationalization of all the instruments of production, the State was a highly complex institution which could not possibly be controlled by the masses, and so the fiction was developed that the Party represented the workers and was entitled to take all decisions on their behalf. Even this basis was soon narrowed down, and before long the will of the people had come to mean the will of the Central Committee, or even of one man —to whom the right to persecute thus passed.

This logical, historical development fitted in with the dogmatism inherent in Marxism. However much Lenin, Stalin and Khrushchev may have altered the teaching of the Party on particular issues, they have clung tenaciously to the belief in the infallibility of dialectical materialism. That science is adequate, they claim, to provide the right answer to all political problems. Individuals may from time to time make mistakes in applying it, but it is then for the Party to declare the 'correct' line, and as with other claims to infallibility, no subsequently confessed mistakes appear to shake belief in the theory. The Party is thus the custodian of truth, and is bound to enforce acceptance of it on all. Persecution of those who are even

suspected of being counter-revolutionaries is not only justified by the arguments which led the idealists to join the Party, but is an essential part of the inevitable process of the destruction of capitalism.

To many people today the claims of some historical churches to be the sole repositories of theological truth, and their readiness to consider themselves under an obligation to persecute unbelievers for the good of their souls, appear to have been serious blemishes in those institutions. In those churches, however, there is full acknowledgment of a superior authority. The Catholic Church may claim infallibility for its Head, but he himself is subject to the authority of God. The Moslems, who at times in the past have relentlessly persecuted unbelievers, know that they await the final judgment on their acts. The rulers of the U.S.S.R. or any other Communist State are free from moral or spiritual restraints and since rebellion against a government armed with modern weapons is almost hopeless, they enjoy the absolute power which corrupts absolutely.

The dynamism of Communism is undeniable and has been well described by George H. Sabine. 'The philosophy as such does not account for the intense, indeed the evangelical fervour of the movement—the sense of having a doctrine that is true beyond the peradventure of a doubt, the feeling that this doctrine affords a unique insight into the true nature of society past and present, and the belief that it makes clear the line that one must take for the present and the future. Beyond everything else, perhaps, is the conviction, which another age would have expressed in the language of religion, that one is the organ of a cause that cannot fail, that the issue is not really in doubt, and that even present failure portends future victory.'

So vital a force cannot be ignored. In our day there is a spiritual vacuum to be filled. Until the eighteenth century, belief in God was almost universal. When that belief declined, Reason and Humanitarianism were enthroned and in regard to conduct they were not very different from the older religions. Two World Wars have produced in the minds of many people a sense of helplessness and a loss of faith either in God or man. It is into this vacuum that Communism, with a good deal of success, seeks to enter.

A thinking man must obviously make up his mind whether this strange, new religion proceeds from God or the Devil—or if he regards those terms as old-fashioned, from their modern, psychological equivalents. In doing so, he will necessarily remember that Communism is not just a view of history, or an economic system, but a way of life that is written into the philosophy of Communism. That philosophy has had an orderly

and logical development, and the evils which it has produced are not accidental growths which can be sloughed off later. They are the very life blood of the system. An intelligent man has therefore two alternatives. He may accept Communism with all that flowed from it under Stalin, or he may reject it as destructive of all that is best in man. There is no half-way house.

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